WAR: an Ode
And Other Poems

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And Other Poems

BY

RONALD CAMPBELL MACFIE

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TO

RUDYARD KIPLING

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WAR: an Ode

War: An Ode

PART I

i

SPINNING in space, a filmy cloudlet shone
Festooned and frayed,
Like a torn braid
Of woven pearls and silver—thin and wan
As tenuous ghosts that in the saffron dawn
Upon the sweltry banks of Acheron
Swither and sway. And ever and anon
Out of the margin of the mist there came
Flurries of flame
And drifts of scarlet scud,
As if of glairy tears, and clotted blood,
Together spun—
Spindrift and spume of the vortiginous surge
Of a sun-shattered sun,

Around whose fiery wrack was furled the cloud,
Like swaddling robes, or bridal veil, or shroud.

ii

So seethed the cloud, and reeling from the gurge,
Smelted and smoothened from the rough débris
By the hot hands of Fire, the Thaumaturge,
The Earth leapt free.

* * * * * *

Around it, burned and boomed a plangent sea
That ever by the cruel knotted scourge
Of a wild crashing rain of crimson scree
Was whipped to plashing whirls of purple foam.
And ever lashing from its dædal dome
There hissed a heavy hail of falling stars
Whose flick upon the lava's filigree
Made rosy scars.
And ever from the coastal crust of slag
Slipped candent cliff and burning crag
Into the cauldron of the bubbling ore,

And steamed and wallowed in the red fiords
Like monstrous hordes
Of snorting dragons weltering in gore,
Stabbed in the loins with the long jaggèd swords
Of the livid lightning. Yea, and evermore
Came from volcano-throats the raucous roar
Of lava and of thunder; and the shore
Reverberated with the ponderous tide
As the sun rose in reckless wrath and tore
—Till the astounded stars heard the torn granite gride—
The bossy, slaggy moon from the Earth's riven side.

iii

Still the hoarse thunder bellowed, still the fire
Moulded to its desire
Mountain and swire,
And precipice and dale,
So porphyry pinnacle and granite spire
Guttered and sagged like candles in a gale;
And basalt towers
Wilted like flowers

In scorching showers
Of radiant hail;
And the crust moaned
And groaned
And rose and fell
Like the hot surges in the heart of hell.
But round the planet in ætherial space
There lurked a frost that gripped it like a vice
A frost so fierce could curdle flame to ice—
The frost of nothingness that never knew
A genial flush of warmth come burning through
Its deadly limbus. In its dire embrace
The furnaces of fire forgot to glow;
And from the welkin dun,
Unlighted by the sun,
A clattering clinker fell of iron snow.

iv

And from the white becloudèd skies,
Like scalding tears,
From closèd eyes,
Held shut by fears,

Gripped tight by pain,
There trickled through
A drench of dew,
An ooze of tepid rain,
And down the smouldering hills,
Gather, by slow accrue,
A leash of little rills,
Amber and blue.

v

And rills became a stream,
And streams to rivers grew,
And in a cloud of steam
Plunged madly out of view
Down precipices steep
Into a chasm deep
Trenchèd and torn
In the Earth's wounded side
By the phrenetic tide
When the white moon was born;
Till, lo, in creeks and bights and bays,
Clad in a shining rainbow haze,—

A diapase
Of chrysoprase,
And lapis-lazuli,—
There dreamed and gleamed,
And played and swayed,
And surged and sang *the seal*

vi

Thus was our planet wrought by arts of war,
By spear
Of Tyr,
By thunderbolt of Thor;
Thus did granitic isle and iron floe,
Welded and rivetted by hammer blow,
Assume the semblance of a solid Earth,—
Become a womb,
A cradle and a tomb,
Where wondrous things had burial and birth.

vii

The lustral fires burned low,
The lurid glow

Of the live lava dimmed and died away,
Only betimes an ember, burning slow,
Gleamed in the ashes grey,
Like an eye glazed and dull
In the worm-nibbled skull
Of some dead beast of prey
And softly round the ledges of the land
The surf went fumbling like a lover's hand
Feeling with wistful wonder
A living heart thereunder
That beat and throbbed athro' the silver sand;
Or kneading clay and lime
Into a tawny slime
That in the swaying motion of the tide
Quivered like some sea-monster's wrinkled hide.

viii

And, lo, upon the tawny briny mud
Flickered a smouldering bud—
A spark of green,—
A little speck, a tiny spore,
That on the vast savannahs of the shore

Was hardly to be seen.
Not tinier the dust a zephyr blows
From the new-ripened anther of a rose;
Yet in its core
Were hidden more
Wisdom and love,
Beauty and grace,
Than all the suns and all the stars of space.

ix

Who in the store
Of helpless atoms huddled on the shore
Could have foreseen,
Fore-guessed, foretold
The vastitude of vernal green,
The granaries of autumn gold?—
Who in the voiceless atoms on the beach
Could have foreheard
The singing of a bird
The mighty harmonies of human speech?—
Could have foreknown
The living hands of flesh, and blood, and bone,

That from that little greenery would reach?—
Who from the past
Could have forecast
The evolution of the future vast,
And guessed that in the tiny cell,
Were love, and hate, and heaven, and hell.

x

Silently was the work of life begun;
Upon the fairy anvil beat the sun;
Into the elfin furnace rushed the air
Forging shapes weak and strong, and foul and fair,
While unseen Death and unsurmisèd Love
Stood watching there
Ready to test and prove,
To kill and spare;
And by and by the green began to move
To breathe and feed, and swim and creep,
To sprawl across the sand, and voyage o'er the deep,
And by and by the sea grew white with swarms
Of flimsy forms.

Bits of soft living slime,
Prisoned in shells of lime
Most delicately built,
Went swimming to and fro,
Or, dying, fell like snow,
Luting the ocean floor with oozy silt.

xi

And now on land life was no longer dumb:
Out of the ferns and moss, across the sky,
Insects with gauzy wings began to fly,
And buzz and hum,
And in the grass, crickets began to try
Their scrannel violins of wing and thigh;
Anon, in marshes like the bogs of Styx
Uncanny things half bird, half bat,
And monstrous reptile shapes bloated or gaunt,—
Atlantosaur, and archæopteryx,
And dinothere, and labyrinthodont,
And pterodactyl, monstrous things begat.
And evermore Death came, and laughed, and slew,
And patient Life and Birth bent to their task anew.

xii

Death wrought with divers tools. Unwearièd
Across the warp of life that wimpled red
The lightning flashed, shooting a livid thread
Like signatures of the undying dead—
Through the half-woven tapestries of doom;
And the mephitic breath and mordant fume
Of the hot-throated craters scorched and charred
The living lengthening web; and through the gloom
Some tempest howling shrill, and breathing hard
Frayed Life's unfinished fringes; and disease,
Nibbled the fairy fabric as the seas
Nibble their rocky headlands. Yet, unmarred
Unscathed, unscarred,
Life ever wove in carpel and in womb
Imperishable webs of flesh and bloom.

xiii

Crumpled the cooling crust, and the deep ocean bed
Luted with lime and slime of creatures dead
—That snow of death through the long æons shed—

Was puckered into marble mountain heights
—Himálayas and Alps, and Dolomites—
Where eagles had their eyries, and once more
Subsided and became the ocean floor;
And fire piled high sierras, and the rains
Wore them down inch by inch to desert plains;
And inch by inch the coral islands grew,
Like daisy garlands, in the ocean blue,
And inch by inch the glaciers ground away
The granite boulders into boulder-clay;
Yet never ceased the seethe of life, and still
Birth bore new forms faster than death could kill.

xiv

So the fierce æons ran,
Till with exalted head
Thronèd upon the dead,
There stood immortal man—
Fruitage of all the tilth
And spilth
Of fire—
Following dreams and driven by desire.

Through the gate of breath,
In the arms of Death,
By the path of Love, from the pit of shame,
With a fiery past,
And a future vast,
To the world he came.

XV

Spawn he was in the steamy mire,
Fins he was in a primal sea,
Wings he was in the feathered choir,
Or ever he came a man to be.
Of dead the mountain peaks are built,
Of dead the soil, of dead the silt—
The dead that led the way to him
Through shell and claw to brain and limb.
In every thought, in every part,
Made is he of a million slain,
Blood of the dead is in his heart,
Dreams of the dead are in his brain.

Made at such infinite and fiery cost,
Wrought with such delicate and deadly art,
—Spirit and heart—
Out of things born, and buried, found and lost—
With all the energies of fire and frost
Of wind and flood
Of life and death
Tempestuous in his tidal blood
Combustive in his burning breath—
With unconsumed Eternity behind,
With unconceived Eternity before,
Man, the custodian of immortal mind,
Stood with bewildered senses at the door
Of darkling wisdom. Round him still was blore
Of tempest and of furnace. From the peak
The purple pennons of volcano-reek,
That the fire tossed and tore
Streamed in the sky an omen and ostent
Of bloody battle, and belligerent
He heard the salvos of the thunder speak

And crash
And roar.
He watched the lightning's white stiletto flash
And stab and gash
The bosom of the darkness as a fiend
Might stab a swarthy woman lying dead;
He saw the forest like a cornfield gleaned
By the white sickles of a surging flood;
And even the gorgeous sky of gold and red
Seemed a God's brazen byrny oozing blood.
Yea and he saw
How talon, tooth, and claw
Waged internecine combat, and he, too,
Seeing that life was war, went forth and slew.

xvii

Naked and weak,
He flaked a flint, and strung a hickory bow,
And struck a spark, and in a mountain gorge
Hammered a spear, upon a granite forge
With cunning blow.
And spoored the mammoth o'er the prairie bleak,

And faced and fought it to its overthrow;
And stabbed the bear upon the glacial peak,
And clubbed the walrus on the drifting floe,
Till the warm blood ran crimson to the creek,
Steaming upon the snow.

xviii

No fear could blear his sight, no woe could blanch
His vivid blood. The glacial avalanche
Like a white Juggernaut rode down the land
Trampling the forests with a madman's lust,
Braying the iron-hearted rocks to dust,
And drift, and sand.
And famine, and fatigue, and cold, and pain
Cramped his fierce heart and froze his fervid breath
Yet still he conquered. At his feet in death
Writhed monsters could have crunched him 'tween
their teeth
Like a ripe berry, or a cob of grain,
But there he stood with all the world beneath,
A pigmy creature with a giant brain.

Yet came no peace. Still in his heart was strife;
A far fore-seeing Fate
Using his pride and Hate,
Wrought at the web of life;
And driven still
By his own passionate will
Upon a bloody way,
He seized his sword his brother man to slay.
Nation slew nation: horde abolished horde.
Vengeance and famine swept whole tribes away,
And still there sped the spear and flashed the sword,
Carving the human clay;
And still life came of death, and joy of pain,
And still, as Man his fellow-mortals slew,
Like a red rose, watered with bloody rain,
The human spirit grew,—
Grew in the depth and height of its desire,
Grew as the Earth had grown amid the fire.

PART II

i

WHAT Chalybes
Are these?
A million fires, a million furnaces
Flicker and flare.
The maw of Earth disgorges
Fuel for mighty forges;
Antediluvian trees
From Carboniferous bogs
Sublimed to fiery fogs,
Pollute the golden air.
The flames upleap and flash,
The hammers swing and crash,
What Chalybes
Are these?
What are they forging there?

ii

The fiery chimneys belch Fear's mordant breath.
The noisy forges beat the tune of Death.
Hate swings his hammer on the trenchant steel.
Untiringly with bony bloody heel,
Death works the bellows: at macabre looms,
Despair and Wrath are weaving tragic dooms;
And all men's art,
Wisdom and skill,
Courage of heart,
And force of will,
Their love of good, their faith in God,
Their power to crave, and to abhor,
Are grown to crank and piston-rod,
In the grim red machine of war.

iii

Like belt, and wheel, and blade and shaft,
They ply a dull mechanic craft;
Their hearts beat in the hammer blow,
And with the roaring furnace draught

Their breathings and their sighings go.
Outside are wings and summer winds,
And sunlight dancing on the sea,
And woods, and hills, but they are blind
With hate and fear, and cannot see.
Outside is singing and a thrush
Calls through the lilac to its mate;
They only hear the roar and rush
Of the insensate wheels of Fate.
With bodies weary, souls outworn,
They watch the wondrous years go by.
Toiling that Freedom may be born,
Turned into dead machines they die.

iv

And who are these
Who march amain
From Cossack steppe, and Belgian plain,
From heathlands of the Hebrides,
And lily gardens of Touraine,
From little happy villages,

Mid Roman roses, Saxon vines,
From minarets and palaces,
By Delhi palms, and Danube pines.

These are the cohorts Fate has hurled
Armed with a sword, a soul, a dream—
These are the warriors Fate has hurled
To slaughter and redeem
The world.
These are the fierce primæval fires,
Of God's desires—
His furnace flame, His breaker-surge,
His graving tool, His pruning knife, His punitory scourge!

V

Great slogans drive them forth, great battle-cries—
"Liberty," "Fatherland!" The bounding blood
In their own fearless hearts is as the flow
Of an insurgent flood, and in their eyes
The wild auroral lights of battle glow.
Yea, and they know
The gentle, low,

Pleading, persuasive voices of the dead,
The far forlorn
Sweet baby-whispers of the yet unborn.
By all these are they called, and lured, and led,
And overhead,
Unsoiled, untorn,
As their dreams golden, as their passions red,
Flutter the broidered banners of the Morn.

vi

As in a dream I watch them go,
From Seine to Aisne,
From Mons to Meaux;
I see them in a blazing hell
Of poison-gas, and shot, and shell,
At Vimy Ridge, and La Boiselle,
At Pozières and Neuve Chapelle,
At Ypres, and Fler, and Le Cateau;
I see them march by Meuse and Marne
Trudging along through mud and clay;
I see them camp in field and barn,
In stable and estaminet.

I see them on the Anzac beach,
On Balkan hill, on Tigris sand,
Armies of divers creed and speech,
Each with destruction in its hand,
Each true and brave,
Dying to save
The Honour of its Fatherland.

* * * *

vii

O eyes with dauntless courage lit
Enamoured of the fierce Unknown
Where dreams of splendid glory flit,
And bugle-calls are blown!
White limbs so lithe
Red hearts so blithe,
Bright souls so true,
The sword will harvest like a scythe
Long bloody swathes of you!

PART III

i

WHAT troglodytes are these,—these men like moles,
Who tunnel in the soil their saps and mines,
Or burrow holes,
Into the rocks under the roots of pines;
Who make their homes
In catacombs,
Or crouch on rotten planks and muddy logs
In desolate obscene Serbonian bogs;
Who in the craters of the riven land
Contrive their hornet-nests with bags of sand,
And mud, and slime,—
Are these weird creatures all alive with lice,
And black with grime
Our sons, our fathers, and our husbands! Yea,

This is the altar of their sacrifice,
This is the price
That for your sakes they pay.

ii

Hour follows barren hour, till heart and brain
Grow stagnant as the water in the trench.
Penned in a ditch upon a muddy plain,
Poisoned and palsied by the sickly stench—
The festering corruption of the slain,
Body and soul seem impotent and vain.
There in a bloody pool
A carrion crow pecks at a bloated horse;
And some poor fool,
Sniped like a frightened rabbit in the gorse,
Has left on No-man's Land his huddled corse;
And there some forty—fifty yards away,
Lusting to slay,
The foe makes caves
And pits, and graves,
In the same mud and clay,

Yet none have hate
Save against Fate
That turns poor simple men into wild beasts of prey.

iii

Can this foul charnel damp,
This spiritual cramp,
This lewd stagnation of the soul be war?
Where are the battle-cries,
The flashing eyes,
The flying banners and the spears of Thor?
Here there are only mud, and filth, and flies,
And foul obscenities men's hearts abhor.
Where are the flaming hope, the fiery cross
That called us to the rampart and the fosse?
Alas, alas, faint, far-away they seem
Like a dim memory of a holy dream.

* * * * * *

iv

Now Moloch goes to reap,
Across the sky his search-lights wheel and flash,
His livid lightnings leap,
His thunders crash.
The gobbling howitzers and whinneying guns
Sound like the howling billows of the deep,
Hurled on a rocky steep
By a tornado's ire.
The tumult stupefies and stuns
Spirit and sense, as, like a devil's choir,
Ten thousand mouths of steel give tongue and spit,
In stuttering staccato, lead and fire.
The bullets of the shrapnel hiss and thud,
The star-shells burst in bud,
Orange, and green, and red;
The rockets rise and spread,
Their blossoms overhead;
And every trench and every crater-pit
Is blotched with blood
And dappled with the dead.

The belching mortars with war-drunken breath
Hiccup forth shells, whose entrails—flame and death—
Make every mound and parapet a pyre,
And bloody shards that turn the spirit sick
Lie mangled in the mire,
Or on the barbèd wire
Where the infernal flammenwerfer lick
Shrivel and blacken. E'en the gracious air
That has been wont to tremble into prayer,
To throb and thrill
And vibrate into music at our will,
Is turned to steel and stone, and strikes to kill;
While poisonous and thick,
Out of strange Stygian glooms,
Wreath after yellow wreath,
Rise acrid fumes
That grip and tear the throat like fiery teeth
Of some grim dragon snorting flames of hell,
Yea, grip with grip accurst
Till the blue veins upon the forehead swell
And the blear eyeballs burst.

vi

Above the vapour, loom the monstrous wings
Of fierce uncanny harpy things—
White hawks and kites of hate that whir and fly
Dropping down death from the unheeding sky.
Across the plain with mighty mottled flanks
Waddle reptilian tanks—
Iguanodons and Juggernauts of steel—
These nose their way
Through mud and clay
And crush and mutilate with cloven heel
The fallen and the dying, till the mud
Is like a winepress, purpurate with blood
Of mangled mortals. On the sea afloat
Great Boats of Battle cleave the waves asunder,
Keel after keel,
And stertorously, through the strident throat
Of giant guns, join in the battle thunder.
While deep thereunder
In the blue water's mirk
There slink and lurk
Black submarines, like devils with a dirk.

* * * * * *

vii

Now through the forests drives the shrapnel hail;
Great jaggèd flying hatchets hew and hack,
And whirling blazing flambeaus flash and flare,
Flaying the beeches bare,
Burning the birches black.
The woods are threshed as by a flaming flail
The mighty branches splinter, split, and crack,
The growth of twenty centuries, alack,
The patient carpentry of sun and rain,
The moonbeams' and the sunbeams' bivouac,
Becomes a piteous wrack—
A black and bloody shambles of the slain,
A Golgotha of skulls, a hideous house of Pain.

viii

O friendly trees,
O brave brown branches swaying in the breeze
Full of young hopes, full of old memories,
O cool green leaves that whispered to the moon,
Or threw the tune
Of singing thrushes to the evening air,

Or scattered dew upon the thirsty sod
How ye are hacked and hewn
Nought now but shrivelled blackened stumps are there,
As tho' a leprous blasphemous Despair
Uplifted handless arms to heartless God!

ix

The craterous soil bludgeoned, and scalped, and tossed,
Is like a stormy sea congealed by frost,
And every hummocky wave
Of mud and clay
Is like a mighty barrow grave,—
An ossuary of the brave,
Frozen, and still, and grey.
Ah bitter barren sea thy tide devours—
Thy surf and spume
Engluf, entomb
Hamlets, and thorps, and cottages, and towers,
Castles and palaces, and barns and bields,
Orchards and gardens, white and red with flowers,
Arcades of roses, honeysuckle-bowers,
Vineyards, and olive-groves, and harvest-fields!

x

Ah bitter barren sea!
The quiet home where children used to play
Or kneel and pray
Beside a mother's knee
Huddles a heap of rubble in the mire,
Or, burnt by fire,
Stands like a dead man's dream
Nor light, nor love, nor joyance may redeem—
Stands with black rafters where the blind bats sway
Like little corses on a gibbet beam—
Where the rats climb and scamper night and day,
And carrion-crows
In greedy rows
Wrangle and scream
Above their prey.

xi

All that Love's labour through long years of toil
Had sorely wrested from the stubborn soil—

The white-washed cottage with the thatchèd eaves
And portico entwined with ivy leaves,
The ruggèd poplars of the avenue,
The hedges glistening with morning dew
Strung like round pearls upon a gossamer thread,
All these are gone—all these are gone and dead.
The olive-groves, the vines, the wheat, the maize,
The meadows where the kine were wont to graze,
The cosy arbour in the orchard nook,
The rustic bridge across the gurgling brook
To the old mossy drowsy droning mill,—
All these the tides of fire and death erase
And rend, and burn, and blacken.
Yea, and still
The howling havoc sweeps across the land.
Valley and moor, and hill
Are scourged and devastated. Bomb and brand
Murder and maim,
Ravage and rape,
Cathedrals topple, cities fall in flame,
And church-yards yawn and gape.
There in his shrine Christ is re-crucified:

The bullets on the nails like hammers beat:
The bayonets are in his wounded side;
The daggers have transfixed his patient feet.

xii

Behold the tabid tundra-land of Sin
Where like a yellow mist from brackish streams
Drift melancholy ghosts of Hopes and Dreams!
Behold the dreary deadland where the thin
Fingers of Famine rake the garbage heap
Seeking a crust therein,—
Where Pestilence and Plague with jaundiced skin
Shamble and creep—
Where ghastly bundles in the petrol steep,
And flames incredible begin to leap
Robbing the rats and maggots of their prey—
Round pitiful thing in bloody brown and grey,
Where buried in some dug-out like a tomb
Men in the gloom
Despairing lie
And call in vain to Death and cannot die!

xiii

Here huddle all the scarred,
The halt, the lame,
Those blinded, broken, marred
By steel and flame.
Here the mad walk apart
With tears in their heart,—
Tears that will not flow
That will not gently rise
To cool their aching eyes
Scalded with tearless woe.
They cannot weep, but sometimes laughter vain
Shrieks on their lips
Where still there drips
The dregs of some red cup of poisoned pain
Whose draught has slain the soul and seared the brain.
Behold the land where men their victories win!
Behold the dreary tundra-land of Sin!

xiv

Yet still in Tartaræan glooms,
In muddy pits like fetid tombs,

The thunder-fiends of battle stoke
The lightning fires of tragic dooms,
And woolly wisps of yellow smoke,
And green, and red, and purple fumes,
Like feathery funereal plumes,
Flutter, or on the wind upborne.
Billow and fly
Upon the sky
Like splendid banners slashed and torn.

XV

The planet is all tumult and turmoil,
And madly on the pocked and pitted soil
Drums Death's insane hysterical tattoo—
The carmagnole of guns, *la folie des obus.*
The whole air cleft asunder
Reverberates in thunder,
Whines, whimpers, whinnies, shudders, shrieks and screams
As though the stars were on the mountains hurled
By demons in demoniac nightmare dreams,

As though the Earth's foundation-stones were riven,
As though by plectron of a bomb, or shell,
Or twitching fingertips of fire, or levin,
Death plucked the nerves and sinews of the world,
Strung on a harp whose pedestal was set
Upon the flaming floor of hell,
And yet
Whose pillars propped the very roof of heaven.

xvi

The thunder pauses. With a shriek and roar
"Over the top" surges a line of steel.
Behind cascades of fire that foam before,
The hounds of war go baying at Death's heel,—
Go baying on a trail of human gore.
Out of the broken trenches blink and peer
The beady eyes of muddy human moles
That glitter with alternate hate and fear
Like wind-swept incalescent brazier coals.
Death is upon them, the bright steel grows red,
And greedy Hate is glutted with the dead.

xvii

The "Push" is over, and ten thousand things
That once were Nature's lords and Nature's Kings
That once were men, lie writhing in the clay,
Lie with pink bubbles frothing on their lips,
With gaping wounds from which their life-blood drips,
With filmy eyes o'ershadowed by eclipse,
With arms and legs and faces shot away.
O fair white bodies lying in the mud
So stiff and grey,
Once in your hearts there leapt the living blood,
Once your cold lips could love, and sing, and pray,
Once women at your coming knew the kiss
Of husband, father, brother, lover, son.
Alas, alas, how have ye come to this
What have ye done?

xviii

Has Fate no pity, and has Hate no ruth?
Did God the Maker blunder
Making your bodies' wonder

Filling your hearts with love your minds with truth?
Did God the Father blunder
Making your bodies' wonder,
Filling your limbs with force your souls with fire
With all the dreams and all the hopes of youth,
To leave you bloody carrion in the mire?

xix

Nay, who can tell what such a death may mean?
To be o'ertaken
By lightning and by thunder:
To feel the keen
Sharp blade divide asunder
Body and soul, the unseen and the seen!
To be reborn
Through the sky rent and torn
And on a sudden waken
Into a peace serene
Into the radiance of eternal morn?
Who, who can guess, what such a birth may mean
To him who goes with body young and clean

To him who goes with spirit pure and fresh,
Unknowing blemish and unwotting blame,
In hot pursuit of some immortal aim
Out of the flesh?

XX

A warrior, a lover
What hopes and dreams will hover
Around his head
What beauty will his spirit
Develop and discover
What glory-land of merit
Inhabit and inherit
There in the starry kingdom of the immortal dead?
Surely he will come forth exultant, whole,
Happy, victorious, and unafraid,
A shining, joyous, liberated soul
Knighted by Death's immortal accolade!

PART IV

i

SPAWN
Of a monstrous dawn
Bleary and blind,
Spindrift and spume
Adrift in the gloom
Torn from the surf of the sun
As by teeth of a wind,
So was the Earth begot and begun—
Earth and mankind.

ii

Still in our Armageddon burn the old creative fires,
Still with a sword, a flame, a dream, Life works its fierce desires,

Still the world is smelted and wrought as in an athanor—
Swelters and sweals in the roaring blast of the furnaces of War
But how can we whose paltry life is pent in a petty hour
How can we in faith foresee that Hate in Love will flower?
How can we know what the fiery Woe smelting the bloody clay
Moulds and fashions, with pains and passions, for æons as far away
As the lava and lime of bygone time when the young Earth panted flame,
And out of its wondrous thund'rous heart the burning mountains came?
How can we know that the soul will grow? Seen have we the past
Seen have we the slaggy scree in a blazing furnace cast
Seen have we the fingers of flame, and water, and tempest mould
Things as a lily petal fine, as a granite mountain vast;

Seen have we a filmy cloud in voids of space unfold
As sapphire seas, and emerald trees, and meadows of yellow gold.

iii

We who have seen white Peace come forth thro' the fiery gates of Strife,
We who have seen wise Death at work at the magic loom of Life,
We who have seen the living bones of our living bodies built
Of the porcelain shells of the dainty dead piled in the deep-sea silt,
We who have seen the atoms dance into bird, and beast, and flower,
How shall we doubt Death's Wisdom, how shall we doubt Love's power?
Out of the fiery tumult there thrilled the vibrant creative Word,
Out of the moaning thunder there leapt the joyous lilt of a bird,

Out of the lurid lightning there shone the light of a woman's eyes
And we know tho' Death may come and go yet Beauty never dies.

iv

Bodies and souls from a furnace came, and lo, in a furnace still
War is moulding the human heart, smelting the human will.
Things of the spirit, things of the mind, these are the things at stake.
Not bodies only but faiths and creeds the bomb and the bullet break,
Not mortals only but mortal sins the fire and the shrapnel slay
And aspirations, ideals, hopes perish and pass away.
These are not swords but living souls that clash in the trenches there
Not battle-planes, but battle-dreams that fight in the azure air.

Foolish may be our war-desires, blundering, blind our aims
But still the shoddy and sham of life are burned in the battle flames.
By tempest, by fire, by talons and teeth, by war, and disease and lust
The hand of Death and the hand of Life have wrought at our wondrous dust
But ever above, the hand of Love our destiny controls
Moulding to beauty and to truth our bodies and our souls.

V

But why should we destroy
A body like a temple full of joy
A temple yea, a Hecatompuloi,
With golden gates
Mighty and broad,
Made not for little Fears and Hates,
But for the fiery Chariots of God.
Why must we slay? We know not why.
With holy pleas we go to kill;

With noble aims we go to die;
But ever still,
Behind our dreams, behind our will,
There work inevitable Fates
Whose far desires our swords fulfil.
We know not why!
Our words are vain!
No gleaming words can glorify
So much of sin so much of pain,
But we are driven by the Soul
That with his Beauty maketh whole
Even the wounded and the slain.

vi

Cæsar and Tamurlaine and Rameses
Martel the Hammer, Attila the Scourge,
Sardanapalus and Miltiades,
Cyrus, Sennacherib, yea all of these
Were but the surge
Behind the urge
Of boundless seas,

Were but the ripple and the spray
Of far-away
Infinities.
That which they did they know not, neither knew
What fair far things they fashioned as they slew,
But Death and Life were wise,
With prudent prescient eyes,
And still eternally Man's spirit grew,
And still the Lord,
Keeping a watch and ward,
Shapes man's immortal soul by man's own foolish sword.

vii

Cause and cause behind cause
Root and root beyond root
Laws and laws behind laws
Ripen war's bloody fruit
But the bloody ripened fruit of the tree of Strife
In a core of love has the seed of eternal Life.
These are the throes
That make the rose,

These are the precious pangs of birth,
These are the woes
Whence ever grows
The myriad Beauty of the Earth.

viii

O seismic souls of men, the shaken world
Won peace and beauty after wild turmoil.
The flowers their silken bannerets unfurled,
The meadows comforted the tortured soil;
And now while still the craters trickle blood,
While still the ground is scourged by fiery rains,
The cornflowers and the poppies burst in bud
From the warm ichor of Life's genial veins;
And in the ulcerous gashes of the shells
In fœtid hells,
In leprous thickets full of death and shame,
Twinkle the starwort, and the pimpernels,
And gorse, and charlock, and laburnum flame;
And while the raucous cannon belch and roar,
In sudden silences amid the thunder
We hear the skylarks singing as they soar

Of beauty and of wonder;
And in the trenches, cheek by jowl with Death,
(O heart of Youth indomitably strong!)
We hear the muddy boys with merry breath
Chorus a mirthful song.

ix

And all these cataclysms of the soul
Will end in light, and harmony, and peace:
The battle-thunder will no longer roll,
The roar of guns will cease.
Only the embattled legions of the mind
Spirit with spirit will in love contend
To comprehend
The Soul behind
Beauty and Power—
The Love that sighs in every wind
And buds in every flower.

x

Time is so brief, Eternity so long,
Life is so low, Infinity so high,

Our bodies are so weak, and Death so strong,
So soon we wither and so soon we die,
That only things of spirit will endure
And love itself only of Love is sure.
Yet if we clutch the Eternity in Time
The Infinity that lurks in finite things—
If still we soar and still we climb
With wounded feet and weary wings
Still higher in the realm of thought—
If we have agonized and fought
For Truth and Beauty day by day
The little things that we have wrought
Will never fade and die away
But grow and spread
As from the dead
Evolved our bodies' magic clay.

xi

O, brave the banners flowing
Inscribed with holy names,
O, bravely men are going
Into the battle-flames!

And bravely men have striven
For this or that high prize
Yet they are drawn and driven
To ends they have not wrought for
To good they have not sought for
To goals they have not fought for,
By Love that never dies—
By the same Love impassioned
That filled the Earth with fire,
And fiercely finely fashioned
In Beauty its Desire—
By the same Love whose sighing
Is Pity's gentle breath
By the same Love who dying
Conquered Death.

xii

Not conquests of great cities
Not mastery of great seas
But little loves and pities
Will be their victories,

Yea little loves and pities
And children on their knees—
Fair children to inherit
New soarings of the soul,
New faculties of spirit,
As centuries unroll,—
Not arrogant ambitions
For Empire rich and broad,
But ever brighter Visions
Of the wise heart of God.

From every crater bloody
Will bloom a kindly thought;
From every tortured body
Some beauty will be wrought.
Love will again awaken,
Truth will regain her crown;
Men's seismic souls have shaken
A million Dagons down.

OTHER POEMS

A Quatercentenary Ode*

ETERNITY is throned upon thy spires:
Upon Eternity thy towers rest:
Thou wert conceived in the eternal fires
Of the sun's womb: upon the sun's white breast
Wert carried ere the souls of men were made—
Nay, in the nebula the seed was sown
Of every stone,
And by the stars were thy foundations laid.
The fire-mist held thee ere the sun it bore;
The sun had presage of thee ere she hurled
From her wild heart the world;
And the hot world enwrapped thee at its core,
In lava and in lightning, to await
The slow, fastidious finishing of Fate.
Then the round earth grew furrowed and grew frore,
And the encircling steam,

*Written for the University of Aberdeen.

Condensing in a stream,
Hissed, boiling, bubbling on a barren shore,
Till the Word spake, and then
There blossomed flowers, and beasts, and souls of men;
And lo, in man's magnificent desires
And high imaginations, wilful, warm,
Thy polished pinnacles, and frosty spires,
Took shape and form,
Till all this growth of granite towers,
And pediments and columns round,
Like spikelets of colossal flowers,
Came burning through the ground.

Eternity was author of thy plan;
The fire-mist, and the sun, and earth, and man
Joined in thy making. Yea, by fire and thought
The gracious granite miracle was wrought.
And now thou art full-grown,
Full-leaved, full-blown—
An encrinite,
Stately and white,
A lily made of stone—

A torch that flares across the night
Of the Unknown—
The spindle and the loom of light—
An altar and a throne—
A temple where the feet of Truth may fare—
A peak where wisdom may be set on high,
Under a cloudless sky,
In Alpine air.

Yet what of Truth and Wisdom can we share,—
We who have seen Eternities prepare
The granite there,
"The polisht stones and squair,"
We who have watched worlds blossom and worlds die,
Who find beneath the silt of ancient seas,
Antediluvian cosmogonies?
How can we guess at things so far away?
How read the Mind who shapes the feathery snows
Then knits a glacier to knead the clay
That makes a rose,
Who sends the cataracts with heavy feet,
And white tumultuous toil,

To grind the rocks to make a meadow sweet
Giving the daisies soil?

How can we know? What knowledge can we win?
The spindles flash: the mighty Destinies spin—
We know not whence we came, or whither we go.
What can we know?
How can we mete the masonry of God?
Our spirits are His trowel and His hod.
We guess a part: He pre-ordains the whole.
We lay a stone: He labours at a soul.
How can we see with His all-seeing sight
Issues so broad,
Meanings so infinite?

How can we know? How can we understand?
Who build a house of Truth upon the sand
Knowing the corner stone to be a lie,
Knowing the roof
Not lightning-proof,
A travesty and mockery of the sky.
How can we know, who know our truth is based

On finite facts by infinity effaced,
On parallels that meet in space behind,
On matter that is force, unconscious, blind?
How can we know whose knowledge is so small?
Why should we know? Why should we live at all?
Why all this toil and strife?

How did the Chaos burgeon into life?
Did it imagine, when the toil begun,
'Twould blossom into star, and moon, and sun
Rolling to rhythmic music? Toil seemed vain.
Mistily, vaguely, dizzily it spun
Racked with strange pain,
In fiery rain,
Through black abysses, while the cosmic power
Compelled it into bird, and beast, and flower,
And this grey temple's pinnacle and tower.

Truth is eternities away,
And we but climb,
In the dark of Time,
To the dawn of day.

What if the truth we do not see?
What matters truth,
To love and youth,
Who labour for eternity?
What if an error or a flaw
Life's beauty mars?
We are hammered to eternal law,
On love's high stithy by the stars.
The hands that made these spires were held
By the strong hand that holds the seas,
And every pillar was compelled,
By mighty cosmic energies.
And what we have not rightly wrought
In stone or thought
Will not endure; yet even so
Out of the false the true will grow.

And in this temple by the Northern Sea
Continually
Will surge and seethe the fire-mist of the mind
Fettered and free,
Radiant and blind—

Will bud and blossom nebulæ of soul,
Till bright, and true, and round, and whole,
Love's planets in their orbits roll,
And wandering Wills their Centre find.

"Blue of Smoke"

HER dreamy eyes are of the blue of smoke,
That softly, frond by frond, and gyre by gyre,
O'er some thatched bothy, in a Highland glen,
Unfurls at gloaming from an ingle fire,

Whose hearth-stone is love's altar,—blue of smoke
Ascending, blending in blue heaven away,—
Blue of the fragrant smoke of vestal flame
That in her virgin heart burns night and day.

General Booth

OUT of the slums
Wild music comes,
The pipe of flutes, the boom of drums,
And down the street strange banners flare.
What means this noise? What means this blare?
This clash of song, this crash of prayer?
What mean these mingled tears and flame?
This glory on the face of shame?
It is the Army of the Lord,
It is the clashing of His sword,
It is His axe's merry din,
Upon the brazen casque of sin.

Out of the slums
Sad music comes,
Low mournful flutes, and muffled drums,

God's greatest warrior is dead.
The fearless fighting-man who led
The Army 'gainst the hordes of Wrong
With crash of prayer and clash of song,
Lies silent in the fosse of Death,
With stiffened limbs and frozen breath.

Out of the slums,
Glad music comes,
Exultant flutes, triumphant drums.
He is not dead; he layeth down
His sword and cross to take his crown.
He is not dead; his dauntless will
Will lead his faithful army still.
His drums will boom, his flags will flare,
His flutes will pipe, his trumpets blare,
Till in the shadow of the slums
Love's banner flies, God's Kingdom comes.

A Flying Song

O THE proud purr of it!
Whiz of it, whir of it!
O the fierce might of it,
Flare of it, flight of it,
Spin of it, speed of it,
Grip of it, greed of it!
O the wild will of it,
Throb of it, thrill of it,
Vim of it, verve of it,
Swoop of it, swerve of it!
Like a great dragon-fly over the blue,
So it flared, so it flashed, so it flickered and flew.

Nay, but the Hand of it,
Taking command of it;
And the wise Soul of it,
Keeping control of it;
And the brave Heart of it,
Beating as part of it,
Aiming the dart of it
Into the air:
That is the best of it,
Ruling the rest of it,
That is the marvel and miracle there!

Yonder no engine, witless and blind,
Driven by senseless piston and rod;
Its pinions are courage, its pilot is mind;
Its petrol and steam
Are vision and dream;
Its nostrils are filled with the breath of a god,
For there, like a speck, 'twixt the wings' mighty span,
Sit the Courage and Cunning and Strength of a Man!
O wind thou art humbled, O space thou art slain
By the wiles of a heart, and the wit of a brain!

O the way of it,
Swoop of it, sway of it!
O the wild will of it,
Throb of it, thrill of it!

"In the White City of Thy Soul"

IN the white city of thy soul
I see thy flickering, dim desires,
Like frozen fires,
That faintly glow,
And all the pinnacles and spires
Are fashioned of virgin snow;
Thro' the white city of thy soul,
The thin wan feet of Fancies go.

In the white city of thy soul
Are great, unlit, mysterious towers,
Where passionate Powers
Are laid asleep,
And all the paths are hid with flowers,
Which only passing Angels reap;
In the white city of thy soul,
No joys exult, no sorrows weep.

In the white city of thy soul,
On silence built, with silence crowned,
There is no sound—
But whispered prayer.
No laughter in the streets is found,
Nor curse of sin, nor sign of care.
In the white city of thy soul
All things are calm, and cold, and fair.

Round the white city of thy soul
High battlements and ramparts run,
Keeping the sun
And wind away;
And dreams in cloistered shadows shun
The light and noise of garish day.
Round the white city of thy soul
Are turrets tall, and strong, and grey.

It lies, the city of thy soul,
White and mysterious and dim,
Filled to the brim
With poesio—

A chalice with a carven rim
Of fleur de lys.
It sleeps, the city of thy soul,
From pity and from passion free.

Yet to the city of thy soul
A day will come, when every wall
Will shake, will fall,
Will crash asunder,
For to thy heart a heart will call
With a beat of thunder,
And all the city of thy soul
Will grow alight with joy and wonder.

Then, in the city of thy soul,
The frozen flames will flare and leap,
The Powers asleep
Irradiant rise;
In the green gardens men will reap
Beauty, and wisdom, songs and sighs,
And all the city of thy soul
Will be alive with happy eyes.

In the white city of thy soul,
The cloistered dreams will all come true,
And dance in dew,
And hail the sun,
And all the visions they pursue,
Of fancy born, of moonlight spun,
In the white city of thy soul
Will grow incarnate one by one.

In the white city of thy soul,
Each dim arcade, each mystic street,
Will grow as sweet
As April-tide;
And Joy will run with the happy feet
And rosy blushes of a bride,
For, through the city of thy soul,
Love like a King will ride.

To Sir William Watson

(On the Occasion of his Receiving an LL.D. from Aberdeen University)

Not by such music as Amphion played;
Not by the subtile silt of ancient seas
Building an oozy rock by slow degrees,
Terrace on terrace in the ocean shade,
Not so the granite corner-stones were laid,
But forged by Nature's procreant decrees,
In roaring subterranean furnaces,
Most painfully, most passionately made.

They came forth molten. And each granite street,
Each hoary pinnacle, and frosty spire,
Remembering the fierce parturient heat,
Hail the marmorean music of thy lyre,
Forged by thy poet heart's impassioned heat
In a crater's crimson crucible of fire.

Battle

THY beauty is bugle and banner—bugle, and banner, and prize!
I march to the beat of thy heart, and the oriflamme of thine eyes.
My falchion flashes thy smile, as I fight to the far-off goal—
The star of love that burns on the battlement of thy soul.

O Queen! the bugle is blowing, the banners flutter and stream;
Thy heart is beating such music, I fight as one in a dream.
I am blind; in my blood there is thunder; there is lightning around and above,
I have cloven a cohort asunder, I swoon on the ramparts of love.

Six Fragments

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

GOD sowed the lightning and there grew a soul.
That soul is thou.
God scattered thunder, and the thunder roll
Is in thine utterance now.

A NEST

My heart is full of lovely words—
Poor, little, helpless, huddled things;
Like a nest full of singing birds,
With broken wings.

WITCHERY

Thy lips bewitch the waves of light
And make a red rose of a white;
And silent tides of air transform
Into a surging music-storm.

A HEART

A crumbling crag, all crevices and caves,
Where birds and bats have homes, and gods have graves.

PARADOXES

Like a white lily swaying in the wind,
So rooted, yet so restless is thy mind;
And thy high soul is like a burning star,
So steadfast and so swift, so instant and so far.

ARTIFICE

Out of our sins
Wise Love begins
To make a soul.
On sense of guilt
A heart is built,
Humble and whole.

City of Granite Tower

i

CITY of granite tower and granite spire,
Of grim, indomitable granite will,
Deep in your granite heart the cosmic fire
Is burning still,
Building immortal mountains for the world,
New Sinais and new Pisgahs; and unfurled—
Magnificently whirled
By tempests of your pity, and your ire
Like leaping flame athwart the heavens blown—
I see the banners of your fierce desire
To set white Freedom on a lofty throne,
Made as of granite stone,
And as by surges of your Northern Sea,
Girt by your souls and swords impregnably;
And gleaming bright,
Crimson and white

Like surf that breaks upon your granite coasts,
Tinged by a sunrise red,
I see great hosts
Of men and ghosts—
The armies of your living and your dead.
I hear the rhythmic pulsing ocean tread
Of thousands of triumphant marching feet;
I hear the thundering, tremendous beat
Of thousands of heroic hearts whose blood
Rolls like a crimson flood,
Drawn by a splendid dream,
Injustice to avenge, dishonour to redeem.

ii

From Ben Muick Dhui gaunt and grey,
From granite cairns of Lochnagar,
From Buchan Ness
And Dyce and Dess,
From Cruden Bay
And Craigievar,
From moors of Dinnet and Braemar,
From banks of Dee and banks of Don,

From Callater and Loch Kinord,
O'er purple heath and thymy sward,
A surging sea of soul and sword,
I see them flowing, flaming on.

iii

Boys of the moor, and of the field,
Boys of the office, and the plough,
From castle, college, manse, and bield,
With hero's heart and dreamer's brow,
I see them marching, marching now.
I see them by the crumbling crown
Of "Kings," and where the granite spires
Of "Marischal" soar like altar fires
Above the traffic of the town,
In leafy lane and stony street,
Their white and crimson surge I meet,
A torrent flowing, flowing down
To the rhythmic fall of marching feet.

I who have felt the North-Sea brine
Upon my lips, whose eyes have seen
The sunlight and the moonlight shine
On the white streets of Aberdeen—
I who have walked in scarlet gown
Beneath the crumbling granite crown,
Who still in fancy and in dreams
Climb Lochnagar
And hear afar
The music of its mountain streams,
Whose heart is still
In every rill,
Whose hopes wade knee-deep in the heather—
Surely I know
Where these boys go.
My soul and theirs must go together,
That mine their blood and mine their breath,
Their fame, their shame, their life, their death.

Eugeny

"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect. In thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them."

By what unseen and subtile bands
Were you two lovers bound and wed?
By tiny unborn baby-hands
Your spirits were together led.

Your meeting passions, seeming-blind
Were in Life's prescient control;
You looked—there was conceived a mind;
You smiled—there was conceived a soul;

You kissed—and in the country dim
That lies beyond the bounds of space,
Foreshadowed was a baby's limb,
Prefigured was a baby's face.

This was your love's supernal source,
And this its mystic mundane goal,—
The grip of the creative Force
That needs a body for a soul.

O wondrous is the eugeny,
That finds a soul its avatar;
God's baby-dream you could not see
Drew you together from afar;

And if perchance you lovers twain
Had been by Fate asunder torn,
Then had God's baby-dream been vain,
A baby soul had died unborn.

In Memory of
Major William La Touche Congreve, V.C.

"The best always befalls the best."
—Quotation from letter of his tutor at Eton.

ONLY the best can e'er the best befall,
Unto the best, the worst must best reveal;
And though he felt the rent Earth rock and reel,
And through the loathly yellow poison-pall
Heard thunder to reboant thunder call,
And glimpsed the flickering of bloody steel,
Yet Faith he had to know that wounds may heal,
And Love he had that could transfigure all,
To his own Spirit's Beauty. So his sword,
Put to such terrible and poignant test
In slaughterous tasks his human heart abhorred,
Seemed in his eyes God's Justice manifest,
And of all glorious fates, the fate seemed best
To die for Freedom, England, and his Lord.

Wild Rose

WILD rose,
Child rose,
Why did you come so late?
I had gleams of you,
And dreams of you,
And I could not choose but wait,
Thro' desolate days,
On lonely ways,
In the desert-land of Fate.
Child rose,
Wild rose,
Why did you come so late!

Child rose,
Wild rose,
Why did you linger so?

I saw your face
In a dreamland place
Years and years ago,—
Your ebon hair,
And your forehead fair,
And your deep dark eyes aglow.
Wild rose,
Child rose,
Why did you linger so?

Wild rose,
Child rose,
Altho' you never knew,
In the dark alone,
I have dug and sown,
For the sake of the Dream of You;
For your happy heart,
I plied my art,
And hoarded my morning dew.
Child rose,
Wild rose,
Has my dream too late come true?

Child rose,
Wild rose,
Why did you hide so long?
I could not *live;*
I have nought to give
But a little sheaf of song,
And a crown of thought,
That my brain has wrought,
And a love that is great and strong.
Wild rose,
Child rose,
Why did you hide so long?

Wild rose,
Child rose,
Never too late for me;
Love can redeem
The tardy dream
With immortality.
You bring me youth,
And joy, and truth,
You give a soul to me.

Child rose,
Wild rose,
Never too late for me!

Child rose,
Wild rose,
Up to your bower I climb,
By the golden stair
Of an olden prayer,
By the tendril grip of rhyme,
By the wings of love
That can soar above
The limits of space and time.
Wild rose,
Child rose,
Up to your bower I climb.

Wild rose,
Child rose,
I bring to you as is meet,
All I have done,

And lost and won,
Victory and defeat;
You were the goal
Of my fighting soul,
The blood of my heart's best beat.
Child rose,
Wild rose,
I lay my all at your feet.

Nay, child rose,
Wild rose,
Years are between us twain.
You have had days
Of joy and praise,
I have had years of pain,
And the bud of you,
With its morning dew,
I can never on earth attain.
Wild rose,
Child rose,
Years are between us twain.

Wild rose,
Child rose,
Into the dark I go;
But the dark will shine
With these eyes of thine,—
Will shine and blossom and glow;
The bud of thee,
Immortally,
Deep in my heart will grow.
Wild rose,
Child rose,
Into the dark I go!

"How Little Seem the Joys and Fears"

"He has placed the world in man's heart" (*Ecclesiastes*).
"Wär' nicht das Auge sonnenhaft wie könnt es dann das Licht erblicken."

How little seem the joys and fears
We shun or chase,
How foolish seem our fevered years
Of smiles and tears,
Beside the music of the spheres
And the high harmonies of Space!

Natheless the spinning dædal world,
Floats in the current of our veins;
Within our souls the stars are whirled;
We breed the planets in our brains.
From us all Being has its birth,
Of all things is our being spun;
In us are Heaven, and Hell, and Earth,
And every star, and every sun.

Daring

I DARE not worship Love, whose warm hands hold
The true immortal worth of mortal breath,
And every deathless beauty this side death,
And seeds wherein are hidden manifold
Spring's promise, summer's glory, autumn's gold—
I dare not, for so many voices say,
"I am the Mighty Love thou must obey—
The Love thy dreams foreshadowed, and foretold."

I thirst for love, and yet I dare not slake
My thirst at his cool fountain's singing flow;
I long to love, and yet I dare not stake
Eternal happiness upon one throw;
I dare not, nay, I dare for thy sweet sake;
Then prithee love me who have loved thee so!

Death, the Child

ONCE in pain I reviled
The greybeard Death
Who grudged me breath,
And lo, from the Tomb of Space,
He came to my torture-place—
Came and smiled;
O God, and he had the hands, and the face,
The tender limbs, and the slender grace,
And the heart of a child.

Death of the dimpled hands, death of the rosy cheek,
Wilt give us all we have lost, and all that we vainly seek.
Seeds of unripened hopes thy fingers hold,
Wilt quicken the dead.
To white and red,
And green and gold,

And flickering passion will flame, and faded promise unfold.
What though our careworn lives may bitter and barren be—
Bitter and cold,
Barren and old,
As the tides of an Arctic sea?
What matter! Thy heart is young and bold,
Thy wings are strong and free,
And health, and wisdom, and wonder are doled
By thy childish charity—
Wisdom, and Wonder, and gleams
Of a glory new,
Rest, and Sleep, and Dreams,
And a Garden drenched with dew;
Till Life in verity seems
But a mist that thy Smile comes through.

Once I gazed on Death, and he looked in my face and smiled;
And now I fear him not, for he is only a child.

Wedding Ode

To a Poetess

i

Like swans on an enchanted lake
Your dreamy days have drifted by;
Now, lovely, dreamy Lady wake,
A Glory lightens in the sky!
The empyrean dome above
Is burning, blinding sapphire blue;
Your misty morning dream of love
Is now a dream come true.

ii

We two have wandered hand in hand
In merry moonlit fairyland;
We two have culled Parnassus thyme
Above the clouds on peaks sublime;

But far more bright
Than fairy-light
This love that dawns upon your eyes,
And higher than Parnassus height
The summit of your Paradise.
No dream is this—this orb of fire,
This splendid peak of white Desire.

iii

Your dream of Love takes human form,
And human heart, and human speech,
And runs to you, alive and warm,
With hands your living hands can reach;
And every other dream grows dim,
He hath such light and life in him.

iv

Yet mid the glory flicker gleams
Of other dreams
Of olden days;
And misty things

With rainbow wings
Still dance adown your sunlit ways;
Love's living heart, so warm and deep,
A million million dreams can keep,
And all fair dreams you ever knew
Still from Love's eyes may smile to you.

v

O be a poet-dreamer still,
With heart and will
Athrob, athrill,
Æolian harps in Beauty's breath,
Until at last God's Love fulfil
All dreams of Life in the dream of Death,
Still dream; still let thy spirit change,
Like light and shadow on the sea!
Still keep existence fresh and strange
With Wonder and with Mystery.

The Heart of a Child

BUDDING her dreams and budding her bosom,
Yet, betimes, when she smiled,
I saw the heart of the Woman blossom
Red in the heart of the Child.

Ode of Welcome to Queen Alexandra

On a Visit to Aberdeen on the Occasion of the Quatercentenary of Aberdeen University

Mother of the Land,
Around thy throne the hearts of England stand
Waiting thy will. And since thou art our Queen,
And since thy life has moved in lovely ways,
The granite loyalty of Aberdeen
Greets thee with love and reverence and praise;
And boasts that these great battlements of stone
Are buttresses and bulwarks of thy throne,
For thou art wise, and they are Wisdom's fort;
And thou art true, and they are Truth's domain;
And thou art kind, and they are Healing's Court,
Where Love and Pity reign:
Thou art the symbol of all things we seek, too lofty to attain.

Welcome, thrice welcome to our granite town,
Thou who hast made the burden of a crown
Burn like a halo, kindle like a star—
Welcome, thrice Welcome! In the days afar
The Queen who joined the Thistle and the Rose,
Making firm friends of foes,
And Mary Queen of Scots, and Her of Guise
Rode down these streets, under admiring eyes,
But never Queen so fair and loved as thou
Who comest to join in our rejoicings now.

"Welcome, thrice welcome, Queen most fair and kind!
Welcome, thrice welcome!" sighs the autumn wind.
"Welcome, thrice welcome!" chants the Northern Sea.
And both come singing from thy home to thee—
We are one in sea and wind as one in heart,
And thou at once our Queen and kindred art;
Welcome, thrice welcome to our Aberdeen!
Welcome, beloved Queen!

Death's Lover

AMOROUS Lover of Death am I—
Lover! Lover!—
All that is holy, and hidden and high,
He will discover.
Lover of solemn Death am I,
Lover! Lover!

Fervent Singer of Death am I—
Singer! Singer!—
Subtile as dew, and soft as a sigh,
Comes the dream-bringer!
Singer of silent Death am I,
Singer! Singer!

Patient Wooer of Death am I—
Wooer! Wooer!—
He knows no guile, and he speaks no lie,

He treads the earth, and he wings the sky,
Dreamer and Doer,
Wooer of wonderful Death am I,
Wooer! Wooer!

Passionate Poet of Death am I—
Poet! Poet!—
Peace is his gift and by and by
He will bestow it.
Poet of beautiful Death am I,
Poet! Poet!

Homeland

WHERE is thy homeland,
Flowerland or foamland?
Parkland,
Or larkland,
Where wert thou born?
Was it some farland?
Cloudland or starland?
Was it an isle at the Gates of the Morn?

Where is thy homeland,
Flowerland or foamland?
Turf-land,
Or surf-land,
Where didst thou rise?
All my soul's clod-land
Grows to a God-land,
Under the spell of thy voice and thine eyes.

Where is thy homeland,
Flowerland or foamland?
Bud-land,
Or scud-land,
Where didst thou spring?
All my heart's dune land
Grows to a moonland,
Seeing thy beauty and hearing thee sing.

In Memory of a Young Airman

BROWN hair, brown brow, brown throat, like bronze
Sculptured by a Praxiteles,
And hazel eyes, like summer dawns,
Lighting the isles of Southern seas.

He seemed like some great poet's dream
Of some white lovely Grecian god—
Adonis, with young eyes agleam;
Or Herakles, with shoulders broad.

Or Hermes, with his wingéd feet
Flying on messages divine;
Or Ganymede, the stripling sweet,
Pouring the gods their ruby wine;

Or Hyacinthus, ere the wound
Turned him to flowers in Zephir's arms;
Or tall Narcissus, ere he swooned
From love of his own mirrored charms.

Yet, though his beauty and his grace
  Were as the dreams of Grecian art,
'Twas England's soul illumed his face,
  'Twas England blossomed in his heart.

And England, England, England lit
  His eyes with loving, filial joy;
He went and gave his life for it,
  This happy-hearted English boy.

And gave it not as one might lay
  A gift upon an altar high;
He did not kneel, he did not pray;
  Gaily he sallied forth to die.

He had nor gods, nor marble fanes,
  He had no pious faith forsooth,
Save English lawns, and English lanes,
  And English homes, and English truth.

England, his Merrie England, stood
  For all things high, and all things free;

For all things wise, and all things good;
For Justice and for Liberty.

So he faced peril with a jest,
And with a smile he paid the price.
England was worthy England's best,
England was worth all sacrifice.

There was such laughter in his breath,
He was so young, and strong, and straight,
His beauty made a mock of death
His joyance had no place for hate.

He went as warrior of the air,
Above him were the sun and stars,
And rosy clouds, and under there
The trenches' livid weals and scars;

The bloody fangs of barbéd wire,
The muddy craters choked with dead,
The cannon belching smoke and fire,
The crests of battle breaking red.

He saw the glint of steel below,
  The thunder of the guns he heard;
But what to him were death and woe!
  He only was a boy, a bird—

A boy on high adventure bent,
  An eagle soaring to the blue;
Up to the radiant sun he went,
  Through the bright fields of air he flew.

He loosed his bolt. The bright death sped
  Spinning like an Ithuriel's spear,
Earth spluttered red around the dead,
  Yet felt he neither wrath nor fear.

For he was messenger of Fate,
  Merely a boy, a bird, a Doom,
And neither doubt, nor fear, nor hate
  Within his boyish heart had room.

There came a blizzard through the skies,
  A shrieking gust of shrapnel rain;

A blinding mist came o'er his eyes,
  He felt a sudden throb of pain;

Then peace. With broken wings he lay
  Upon the ground. But still meseems
The climbing spirit cleaves its way,
  With the white wings of happy dreams.

And still meseems the boundless force,
  The beauty and the love set free
From the gross flesh, will run its course
  Through æons of Eternity;—

Unspoilt, unspent, will reach its aim,
  And from the dead will spring perchance
A Europe purged by steel and flame—
  A nobler England, nobler France.

Yea, from his fame as white as snow,
  And from his sacrificial blood,
The lilies of new France will grow
  The roses of new England bud.

The Resurrection of a Dream

'TWAS buried deep:
I did not weep;
I had forgot.
But Love did not forget to keep
What Love had wrought;
And when *you* spake,—
Wan, half-awake,
Dim as a daylight flame,
Up from my Memory's oubliette, the old Dream softly came.

I cried, "O shrunken form!
O wrinkled mummy face!
Once thou wert rosy-warm,
And fair, and full of grace;
Now art a thing to gibe at in the sun,
To mock and shun,

Go back and dream in thy cold dwelling-place,
Go back and sleep,
Down in thy dungeon deep!
Go back!" I cried, "for all my dreams are done!"

Sheeted in shame,
With chin-clothes of despair,
Shambling along it came,
All tottering and lame,
Up to the upper air;
And, as a soul that perishes with drouth
Might stoop to drink
At a fountain's brink
With famished mouth,
So knelt and drank it of your beauty there.

—O wonder!—as it gazed it grew
Like a faint rose refreshed with dew
Most sweet and fresh,
Spirit and flesh,
With leaping heart, and eyes of blue;
And in its mouth, and brow, and hair,

Your mouth, and brow, and hair, I knew;
And suddenly I was aware
That ye were one, not two:
You were the Dream of all things fair,
You were my Dream, my Dream was you;
You were the answer to my prayers,
You were my Dream of Love come true.

The Blue Bird

Symbol of Happiness

I sought the Blue Bird near and far,
In verdant woods, and azure skies,
On purple peaks of Paradise,
In golden gardens of a star;
But in your eyes
It flits, and flies,
And in your heart its nestings are—
So near, so far.

Like a wild lark that longs for space,
It beats and beats against the blue
Of your bright eyes, then flutters through
Your eyelids, and lights up your face,
As all the true
Warm love of you
Comes flying to my love's embrace,
Out of blue space.

To J. F. White (Art Critic) When Dying

SINCE thou hast beauty all life long,
In sun and shade,
Followed, and worshipped, and obeyed,
Beauty will make thy spirit strong
And unafraid.
Beauty will glorify the gloom,
Beauty will show the unborn light
Leaping within the laden womb
Of weary night,
Beauty will make the silence song,
Beauty will make the darkness bright.

Hast thou not heard the loving Heart
Whose music passes Music's art?
Hast thou not seen a white Hand flit
Across the darkness, lighting it?
Peace surely waits beyond the pain,

'And calm beyond the troubled bar;
We must believe that death is good,
We blossoms of a dying star.
And surely He is kind and wise,
Who made such Beauty for thine eyes.

We watched thee sow, we watched thee reap
Wisdom and Honour day by day,
And now when comes white-lidded Sleep
To lead thee down the Lonely Way,
We will not sigh, we will not weep,
For Beauty's thoughts are wise and deep.

What though the night be dark and dumb?
Out of the night
Will issue light,
And song will from the silence come.
So lie at rest
On Beauty's breast,
Who maketh Beauty knoweth best.

Pan's Flute

My heart's whole love in thy white hand I lay,
Irrevocably as befits the deed,
Undoubtingly, for surely Love decreed
Complete surrender, and I must obey.
Sweet Lady, do not throw the love away;
There may be roses in a wrinkled seed,
And Pan drew music from a broken reed
Till all the world danced round to hear him play.

Imprisoned in my passion's thorny fruit
A million crimson roses crumpled lie;
And though my melancholy heart be mute,
Touch it and lyric voices will reply.
Make of the hollow reed a magic lute,
To tremble with thy breath, and sing, and sigh.

The "Titanic"

(An Ode of Immortality)

i

O, ribbed and riveted with iron and steel,
Cuirassed and byrnied, breathing smoke and flame,
Cleaving the billows with her monstrous keel,
A Titan challenging the gods she came!
The surf piled lilies round her eager prow,
The wind made music through her mighty spars,
Her hot heart thudded, thundered, and her brow
Had converse with the stars.

ii

What phantoms of what famous ships of old
Came to convoy
Her freight of joy,
Her beauty, and her splendour, o'er the main!

Here rocked the weather-beaten barques of Troy
Beside the ghostly galleons of Spain;
And there the *Argo,* with her fleece of gold,
Followed the *Mayflower* with her pilgrims bold;
And yonder, with her motley tattered crew,
Santa Maria o'er the surges flew
On buoyant wing
While Viking warriors, with eyes of blue,
Lay on their oars and wondered at the Thing,—
At the prodigious panoply of steel,
The pounding rods, the whirling blades, the invulnerable keel.

. . .

Natheless, old Charon, paddling in his boat,
Smiled, and the laughter rattled in his throat.

iii

Why does Death's laughter jangle in the dark?
What can he do against so brave a barque?
Louder than any laughter is her speech:
Ten thousand miles her utterance can reach;

And like ten thousand Argus eyes agaze
Her mast lights glimmer and her portholes blaze.
So mightily her turbines whirl and whir,
Great cables she can snap like gossamer,
And tempests move her, but as breathings stir
The branches of a forest. Who would seek
To grapple with the giant strength of her
Must have for battle-axe a mountain spur,
Must have a poniard like a mountain peak.

iv

Yea, but an icy mountain is unloosed:
Riding the sea, it cometh to the joust,
Reckless and ruthless, arrogant and proud,
Clad in white armour, visored with a cloud.
No bugles blow, no trumpets blare,
No oriflammes and pennons flare,
No heralds at the lists proclaim
The great grim Arctic giant's name;
But pitiless, and gaunt, and white,
It tilts in silence through the night.

O sea! O wind!
Can God be blind!
Crash! we can hear its great spear gride,
Gashing the vessel's iron side!

v

Ah! woe is me! A host of men must die,
A host of men must leave the April sky,
The lush green meadows, and the budding trees,
The little children climbing on their knees,
Glorious hopes, and golden memories.
And yet to great and good things seemed they born,
For every morn
The sun came through the gateways of the East
To lackey at their feast.
And they had made the tempests, and the waves,
And steel and steam,
And fire and dream,
Their feudatories, and their slaves.
Why should they lie now in such lonely graves?
Why did inexorable Fate ordain

That heart and brain
Should perish in this moaning pool of pain,
This weltering wailing maelstrom, where Despair
Gripped faith and Courage by the throat and hair.
O white cold faces, staring at the sky,
Did Love of God not hear you cry?
O poor blind faces pillowed on the ooze
Why did God choose
That you should tortured die?
Is the Power of God a Dream? Is the Love of God
a Lie?

vi

We are but puppets of the mighty Powers
That round the planets, and that light the stars.
Time maketh dust of palaces and towers,
Of faces and of flowers;
Death all our loveliness and beauty mars.
The great fire-hearted world grows red and wroth,
And shrivels up a city like a moth;
It dribbles down its beard in dotard ire,
And buries half a nation in a mire;

It twitches with a palsy, and a town
Is shaken down.
Now from the Pole
The glaciers roll
And bray and grind the mountains into mud;
Now from the deep,
Where the oozes creep,
New mountains bud.
Change, change, for ever change, death, and decay;
All lovely things are born only to pass away.

vii

And yet the Soul in whom all beings are
Discerns so deep, foresees so far,
He plans the meadows of a star
Æons before the star is made,
And in the fire
He moulds to his desire
The tiny blossom and the tender blade.
The deeper meaning of these woes
No mortal knows,

Yet in one web the universe is spun,
Out of the Infinite the finite grows,
Shadow and sun
Are woven in one,
And every star is needful for a rose.

viii

Behold! the hands of Fate,
Wise and deliberate,
Most exquisite in art, most prodigal of power,
Shaped to a strange device
The murderous bit of ice
Of a million starry flakes, each perfect as a flower,
Hammering flake to flake
Simply for Beauty's sake.
And if the berg was made with so much loving care,
The end was surely good, the purpose surely fair.

And we have glimpsed a good,
A meaning issuing thence,
Half-seen, half-understood,
Immortal and immense,—
For we have seen poor mortals die
As only the immortal durst;
And we have heard the deathless cry—
"Women and children first!"
"Women and children first!" The whole world hears;
The cry reverberates adown the years
A trumpet blast, a trumpet call,
So vibrant that the prison-wall
That bars the vision of Humanity
Sags, totters to its fall,—
So brave and fearless that our spirits see
The Love behind it all.
Yea, in spite of glutted Death we feel
That mightier than the Titan's mighty keel,
Than whirling blade, and flashing piston-rod,
Is Courage leaning on the Love of God.

x

Nor are they dead who lie asleep
In the ocean's deep.
Their eyelids small as lily-leaves
Cannot conceal a single star,
For all the things the eye perceives
Behind the eyelid-curtain are.
No changes of the carnal sight
Can blind or blight
The living soul,
Which is the darkness, and the light,
And in itself contains the whole—
Both earth below,
And stars above,
And weal, and woe,
And hate, and love.

xi

What is life but a drop
In an infinite ocean?
E'en though the pulses may stop,
Yet, with unceasing motion,

From the Eternal Soul
The mightier currents roll;
Life is merely a passing phase of a great Immortal whole.

Meadows and trees,
Rivers and seas,
Health and disease,
Good and ill,
Are divers keys
In the harmonies
Of the Master Will,
And the beating heart
Plays its part
And sounds, and is still.

xii

But never can silent death,
Making their laughter mute,
Kissing away their breath,
Blighting blossom and fruit,—
Never can silent death

Mar, and destroy, and break,
Or silence the soul of love, if the soul of love awake.
Love, and the things of Love—Beauty, and Wisdom,
and Peace,
Never grow dim and dumb, never darken and cease.

Even as Death's crooked hand
Twitches the chords of fear,
Our hearts shall understand
How every pain was planned,
Our souls shall hear
How harmonies control
At once the thunder's roll,
And the rounding of a tear.

xiii

Now is the carnate soul
Conscious of body and face,
Conscious of joy or disgrace;
Then shall its wider senses embrace
And compass the whole,

The rest and the riot,
The song and the quiet,
The hearing and seeing,
The infinite being,
The light and the music of measureless Space!

An Extravaganza

HER eyes are dim, yet also bright
  And wide-awake, yet natheless dreaming,
Like moonbeams on a summer night,
  Athro' a nimbus softly streaming,
Or morning's liberating light,
  The blind unhappy dark redeeming.

Her eyes are bright, yet also dim,
  As though with joy they had been weeping,
The lashes, broidering the brim,
  Have tiny teardrops in their keeping,
And rainbows arch from rim to rim,
  And through the arch stars are peeping.

O eyes so bright, so dim, so fair,
  Sunlight and moonlight intertwining,
Weeping and laughter, pride and prayer,
  Within your lily lids enshrining,

Your beauty fills me with despair,
  You blind me, blind me with your shining.

You blind me like the lissom blade
  Of sudden summer-lightning flashes,
Your witchery makes my heart afraid,
  Your beauty baffles and abashes;
I seek a dewy ambuscade
  In the lilied boscage of your lashes.

Yet some day, when the lightnings dart
  Between the lilies of my cover,
Out of my ambush I will start
  And leap the eyelids as a lover;
And secret pathways to thy heart
  My fervid passion will discover.

The Nile

How did He fashion it, He who made it—
This mysterious dreamy land,
Here an oasis with palms to shade it,
Here a desert of tawny sand?

How did He fashion it, how did He make it—
This enchanted land of the Nile?
With a thunder-peal or a sigh did He make it?
A lightning flash, or a loving smile?

Æons ago, in dreams He saw it,
Lying in unborn beauty afar;
Æons long He toiled to draw it,
Out of the core of a burning star.

Terrace by terrace, He built the mountains
Out of the silt of the ancient sea;
Cloudlet by cloudlet, He made the fountains
To feed the river that was to be.

He made the Nile; He filled and fraught it
With golden loads of a magic mire;
He moulded the land, he forged and wrought it,
Now by earthquake, and now by fire.

Age by age He brought to prepare it,
A sculptor's skill, and a painter's art,
Then, He thought in His love to share it,
And made a burning and beating heart.

He made thy heart that His heart might fill it
With dreams of beauty that He had made;
He made thy soul that His Art might thrill it
With palm, and lotus, and sun, and shade.

And I who watch thee as thou art dreaming
The dream of the mind that made the whole,
Discern His love in thy beauty gleaming,
In thy fair spirit discern His soul,

And know to what end His Art has striven
In the desert below, and the sky above.—

Know that the beauty of earth is given
To the heart of man by the Hand of Love.

Praise, O praise to the Artist Giver,
Who made the earth, and the sky, and the sea,
And the lovely dream of the flowing river,
And the lovelier living dream of thee.

Here upon earth there is no abiding,
Still like the Nile life floweth on,
And still our lives are floating, and gliding,
Into the twilight, out of the dawn.

Yet in life can be no forgetting
Of the desert's peace, of the river's calm,
Of thy lips and eyes in their lovely setting
Of maize, and lotus, and corn, and palm.

A Pastel

HER hazel eyes with sweetness are abrim,
Like heather honey in an amber jar;
And in the lucent sweetness seems to swim
A dream of passion like a burning star.

Her breasts are like two clusters of white may
In a blue-veinéd alabaster bowl,—
And, shaken by her heart's wild beating, spray
A drench of dew upon my dusty soul.

Her tresses are like flames that flicker and flare
And smoulder in a smift of gossamer spun;
I kindle my dead heart and spirit there
As one might kindle torches at the sun.

Ski Song

FLEET! Fleet!
Sweet! Sweet!
Fleet! Fleet!
Fair! Fair!
Sweet and fleet, have you wings or feet?
Are you made of earth, are you made of air?
Across the snow
I watch you go,
Like a flying bird, like a falling star;
Prithee say,
As you dart away,
Whether a body or soul you are.

On the Death of John Davidson

i

SAD soul by fickle Fortune spurned,
Sad soul that burned,
And flickered in the dark,
Like a wind-troubled spark,
Had God but given thee a little rest
And sheltered thee a time to burn thy best,
We seeing thee afar
Had known thee as a star
Upon His Breast.
But Pain,
Like wintry rain,
Smothered thy fire with smoke;
Care
Drove thee to Despair
Until thy proud heart broke,—

Not trodden in the winepress into wine,
By the white feet of Sorrow and Desire,
But trampled by the cloven hooves of swine
And cloven feet of devils in the mire.

ii

O bitter smoke to come from such a flame!
O sordid ending of such dreams of fame!
O lowly ending of so high an aim!
Great! wert thou great, we know not, only know
That thou wert great in hope, and great in woe,
Too high to slumber in a grave so low,
Too rich to be compelled thro' lack of gold
To toil at shoddy—to be bought and sold
In the world's market; strong enough to die
Rather than living low to live a lie.

iii

Would it have braver been to slay thine art,
And on the world to crucify thy heart,—
To work at lowly labour for thy bread,

Smiling, as brave men do, amid thy dead,
Letting none know the pain
Of a hope loved in vain,
Of a great thought unsaid?
Would it have braver been to wait for Death
Rather than call him with impatient breath?
Would it have braver been? Is it so brave
To live when love of life is in the grave,—
To live without a soul? Is it worth while
To make pretence of life, and talk, and smile,—
Is it so brave?

iv

What man may judge? We know that thou wert strong,
With a heart full of song
And courage high.
It was no coward who went forth to die,
But one who bravely with despair had fought,
Who in the darkness noble things had wrought
In dream and thought;—
One who had loved the earth, and sea, and sky;

It was a *Poet* who went forth to die.
And O, what faith was thine to go alone
Into the dark unknown;
What splendid faith was thine to woo such Sleep,
Like a wounded thing to creep
Into the deep,
And close thy lids forever on the sun,
Thy "labour ended and thy journey done!"
Thy faith in death was faith in life meseems,
Thy faith in sleep was faith in lovely dreams,
And thy despair
Was but a prayer
To the Love that pardons and redeems.

Lady Moonlight

LADY MOONLIGHT, so I deem thee,
For I think some summer night
God amid the stars did dream thee,
Mystical, and pure, and white.

Yea, and Moonlight is the sunlight—
The reflection of a star,
And all sunlight is the One Light
Of the Love that burns afar.

Lady Moonlight, Sunlight, Starlight,
Howsoever fair thou be,
Fairer is the holy far light
That with love illumines thee.

The Isle of Song

WAN Memories, with patient widow faces,
Looked calmly backwards thro' the withered years,
And smiled to find, like dew, in distant places,
Forgotten tears.

And in the shadowy grove of cypress-trees,
With ashes on their garments and their hair,
I found a crowd of Sorrows on their knees
Before Despair.

Also, I saw a Dream with misty face,
And heavy languid eyelids lily-white,
Who made a mockery of Time and Space
By day and night.

And Hope I met, with eyes so blue and blind
They could discern the fruit within the pod,
And in the darkness of the world could find
The Love of God.

A Bee

YOU take my heart
And drain it dry,
You break my heart
And off you fly;

You drain my heart
And off you flit,
You break my heart,
What matters it?
Come, take and break my heart's red cup!
Come, drain its love! Come, drink it up!

A Hybrid

I SEND her only lilies,
No red amid the white,
For all the pallid flowers,
Ablushing with delight,

Acquire a double beauty;
And every blossom grows,
Like her sweet soul and body,
A lily in a rose.

A Lie

THE higher that our spirits climb,
The more does Truth appear a lie,
The more do things of Space and Time
Appear a rainbow in the sky—
A frail illusion of the sun
That fades and perishes when won—

Merely a rainbow, red and blue,
A thing the birds go flying through;
Yet on the rainbow's coloured arch
(Only perhaps six inches broad)
Armies of Hopes and Dreams can march
Up to the very Heart of God.

Be truth a lie,
Yet far and high,
In search of truth we still will fly;

For even on a rainbow rim
We have a shining path to Him,
So far behind, so high above,
Whose thoughts are truth, whose deeds are love.

But

BUT if you have not met and kissed
  Your lonely Love's Beloved One,
Your heart's a rosebud in a mist
  That has not known the sun.

And though the world be glad and loud
  With all the singing joy of June,
Your soul's a lily in a cloud
  That has not seen the moon.

"Integer Vitæ"

He whose incorrigible Hope redeems
  Banal to-days with beautiful to-morrows,
Who sows the fallow dust with futile dreams,
  Will harvest only sorrows;

And he who spends the sunny days of youth
  Bent double over Reason's rusty shares
Will harvest only stacks of stubbly truth
  And sheaves of golden tares;

But he who lives life plenary and whole—
  Labour and laughter, loveliness and song—
With dreams and visions in his inner soul
  Speeding the plough along.

He who incarnates love in lovely deeds,
  Whose dreams in charity their wings employ,
Will fill Time's furrows with immortal seeds
  And reap eternal joy.

Face Aflower

FACE aflower and soul aflame,
Into my darkness the dancing came,
And my heart cried out and my body yearned,
And the whole world bourgeoned and danced and burned,
And I saw white limbs of the Morning stir
As the darkness flowered and flamed with her.

A Word

YOU take a word,
  And give it wings;
It grows a bird,
  And soars and sings;

And by your art,
  You make a scroll,
A beating heart,
  A living soul.

Memory

NIGHT may forget the day,
  The roses and the dew,
And yet my heart alway,
  Lady, remembers you.

Day may forget the night,
  Forget both moon and star,
Yet deathless, dark or light,
  Your memories are!

To a Son on the Death of his Mother

O HAPPY mother, happy son,
Who—twain in one—
For half a hundred years have grown
Like root and fruit, like branch and stem,
With the same surgent sap in them,—
I, who am blown,
Alone,
Along the ledges of precipitous Space,
Who for eight lustrums have not known
A mother's face,
Do envy you
That kinship true,
That mother-son embrace,
That sympathy of soul in unity of race.

My body fiercely clings
To life, to star, to tree,

To old material mortal things
I touch, and hear, and see.
I nurse my feeble breath,
Dreading the reckless death
Who sets man's spirit free;—
Dreading the depth and height,
The darkness and the light
Of lonely fathomless infinity.
But you will go unfearingly to die,
Will tear the trammels of your body off,
And like a tawdry tattered garment doff
The earth and sky.
Dreading no limbo desolate and dumb,
For through the darkness will your mother come.

Spring and Summer

To R. S.

O, SPRING and Summer meet
Within thy heart to-day,
And Spring is fresh and sweet,
With dainty, dancing feet,
And lips that laugh alway.

And Summer is serene,
Mature and debonnaire,
And cometh like a queen,
Attired in gold and green,
With roses in her hair.

They meet; they curtsy low—
Grave Summer, laughing Spring,
Then hand in hand they go,

To gather and to sow,
To labour and to sing.

O Spring can scatter yet
The seeds your hopes desire—
Daisy and mignonette,
Lily and violet,
And rose with heart of fire.

And Summer can fulfil,
From bud to perfect bloom,
Whatever flower you will,
Of meadow or of hill,
Of sunlight or of gloom.

Thy life is thine to make,
O happy, happy thou!
What seeds will Springtime take?
What buds will Summer wake?
'Tis thine to order now.

Both Spring and Summer wait
Thy bidding and decree;
Thou hast the seeds of Fate,
The infinite estate
Of all eternity.

To a Lady who Sent Verses to Correct

PUBLISHED IN "PUNCH"

ERRATIC the metre,
And errant the rhyme;
The form might be neater,
And feater the time.
And yet thy sweet verses could hardly be sweeter,
Though polished the metre,
And perfect the rhyme.

I will not correct them
As though they were prose,
To carve and dissect them
Were rending a rose.
Thy charm and thy beauty preserve and protect them,
I will not correct them
As if they were prose.

"I Have Found Her"

IN the living world I have found her, found her,
For whom I have waited a whole life long;
Dreams and Desires go dancing round her,
Hopes and Visions about her throng.

In the living world I have found her, found her—
Gracious, and wise, and tall, and strong;
I have knelt at her feet, I have throned and crowned her
With love, and music, and beauty, and song.
In the living world I have found her, found her,
For whom I have hungered a whole life long.

A Miracle

LIFE takes some dust,
A little rust,
A crust
Of bread,
And makes a must—
Blood hot and red;—
And joy, and pain, and love, and lust,
Rise from the dead.

To a Lady in the Reading-Room of the British Museum

i

WHAT are you doing there mid the dust,
You that are made of the sunlight and dew,
What are you doing?
Reading? Reviewing?
Wearing out eyes of impossible blue,
Wasting a heart that the world should be wooing,
Wasting a heart that is tender and true.
What are you doing?
Reading? Reviewing?
Japanese? Volpauk? Hebrew? Hindoo?

ii

What do you seek in that catacomb there,
Lined with a million of folios dead?

What are you finding
Hid in the binding,
You with the lips of geranium red?
What are you harvesting? What are you grinding?
What are you trying to put in your head?
What are you finding
Hid in the binding?
Were it not better to frivol instead?

iii

What are you studying? Science? Theology?
Botany? History? Cookery? Art?
Have you been choosing
Something amusing,
Fin de siècle, and piquant, and smart?
Are you a sermon or sonnet perusing?
Feed you your mind, or your soul, or your heart?
Have you been choosing
Something amusing?
Is it Corelli? Is it Descartes?

iv

Are you the Goddess Pallas Athena,
Goddess of Wisdom, stately and wise?
Have you, I wonder,
Lightning and thunder
Stored in your bosom and hid in your eyes?
Out of the brow of great Zeus cleft asunder,
Did you one morning with shouting arise?
Have you, I wonder,
Lightning and thunder
Brought from the arsenal vault of the skies?

v

Fair necromancer, with your warm beauty
You can awaken the dead and the dumb;
Fair necromancer,
Soldier and dancer
Step to your heart like the beat of a drum;
Emperor, prophet, singer, romancer
Talk till the dome and the galleries hum;

Fair necromancer,
Singer and dancer,
Poet and priest, at your beckoning come.

vi

By your warm wonder bewitched, and awakened,
All the dead hearts of the universe leap;
Lo, with a holloa,
Pan and Apollo
Come from Time's oubliette dusky and deep;
Odin, and Thor, and Eurydice follow;
Out of a cupboard the leprechaun peep;
Lo, with a holloa,
Pan and Apollo,
Odin, and Isis, arise from their sleep!

vii

Dozens of passionate amorous poets
Dance to your heart on the dusty old shelves!

Out of the pages,
Brown with the ages,
March mighty warriors gripping their helves,
Teachers, and preachers, and singers, and sages,
Commonplace people the same as ourselves.
Out of the pages,
Brown with the ages,
Flutter forth also the fairies and elves.

viii

Come all the dreams of the beautiful dreamers,
All the fair dreams that their dreamers outlast,
All the romances,
All the fair fancies,
Fairy-tale visions, and hopes of the past.
There on the desk Queen Titania dances,
Ariel, Oberon come from the Vast.
All the romances,
All the fair fancies,
All at your feet, like a garland are cast.

ix

O but they love you, prophet and poet,
Warrior, patriarch, fairy, and king,
Hero and hewer,
Dreamer and doer,
Come to your beauty, as flowers to the spring;
Every wise heart of the past is your wooer,
Suppliant round you they clamour and sing.
Hero and hewer,
Dreamer and doer,
Each to your beauty his homage would bring.

x

Lady, fair Lady, haply some morning,
As you bend over some wonderful scroll,
You will discover
Lips of a lover
Singing a ditty, and craving a dole
Haply some morning Cupid will hover,

Stringing his bow and demanding his toll,
You will discover
A beautiful lover
Kissing your lips and besieging your soul.

Ex Unitate Vires ("Let Us Take Hands")

An Ode in Commemoration of the Federation of the South African States

i

Let us take hands!
Our fatherlands
Were neighbours on the Northern Sea;
Our cliffs looked out upon your sands,
Our Thames adjoined your Zuyder Zee;
Between us now no barrier stands,
Old comrades and old neighbours we,
Let us take hands!
Briton or Boer—what matters name?
Steady of purpose, strong of deed,
Of Teuton breed
Our fathers came.
We are their seed,

We hold their creed,
We share their fortune, and their fame.
Akin in blood, and speech, and faith,
Why should we work each other scathe?
We both are brave, we both are free,
Shall we not friends and comrades be?
Let us take hands!

ii

Only a fool
Would think to rule
By force of fear, by dint of hate;
Surely the Lord
Will break his sword
Who by a sword would rule a state.
On every kopje, every hill,
The flag of freedom is unfurled;
Here, hand in hand, we must fulfil
A dual destiny in the world.
Singly we neither can prevail;
We twain are kin,
And both must win,

Or both must fail.
We both have won; we both have lost,
With equal shame, at equal cost,
Let us take hands!

iii

Shall not our hearts confederate conspire,
Shall not our wills be wed in one desire,
Out of two kindred peoples to create
One nation wise, and prosperous, and great?
Let us be friends,
Working for noble ends,
Let us be one in spirit and estate!

iv

Now that the Oath of Brotherhood we swear,
Now that our hearts are one,
The veld which lies so desolate and bare
Will blossom into cities white and fair,
And pinnacles will pierce the desert air,

And sparkle in the sun.
Now that the Oath of Brotherhood we swear,
Now that our hearts are one,
Surely a land so prodigal and broad
Will grow a very garden-land of God;
Surely the realm a realm of love will be.
Let us take hands
Whose fatherlands
Were neighbours by the Northern Sea!

Girl of the Golden Voice

GIRL of the golden voice—
Beaten and burnished gold;
Wisely the gods made choice
Of such a chalice to hold
Song to make men rejoice—
Melody manifold.

Wisely they set thee apart,
And gave thee such joy to dole;
For love is the fount of thine art,
And love is its final goal.
Behind thy voice is a Heart,
And behind thy singing a Soul.

Ampelopsis (Virginian Creeper)

I FLAUNT no garden flowers,
Yet leafy thoughts in rhyme
Around thy spirits' towers
Like ampelopsis climb;
And in the autumnal hours,
When all the buds are dead,
Will build thee flaming bowers
With hearts of vermeil red.

Moons

(THE PACIFIC OCEAN IS SUPPOSED TO FILL THE CHASM MADE IN THE EARTH WHEN THE MOON WAS FLUNG OFF)

ÆONS ago, when Earth was still a star,
From his hot heart he tore the Moon away,
And flung her forth to crumble and decay
In deserts where no green oases are,—
Æons ago, but still remains the scar,
Filled with a briny ocean purple-grey;
And still the Moon's caprice the tides can sway,
And still she shines upon him from afar.

Ev'n so thine anger flung me into space,
And in the planet of thy mighty heart
Made a cold chasm for a briny sea;
Ev'n so thy tides still move in my embrace,
And tho' we are a million miles apart,
Ev'n so I still reflect the sun to thee.

"I Called for Love"

I CALLED for love;
And at the name,
From a black sky
White lightning came.

I called for love,
Then sank abashed:
From a dumb cloud,
Wild thunder crashed.

In Memoriam: John Davidson

i

We watched thy spirit flickering in the dark,
Like a phantasmal lark
Fluttering on the moon;
We knew thine ire
Like lightning on a lyre,
Like thunder in the lily throat of June.
We saw thy discontent like lambent fire,
Purple and red,
Smoking and smouldering beneath the pyre
Of Beauty widowed, and of Joyance dead,
Thou with a rapier didst reap the rose
That on Parnassus grows;
Thou the white brow of Poesie didst scar,
Lopping her laurels with a scimitar.
So strange, so fierce, so various, so bright
Thy wrath, thy woe, thy melody, thy light.

ii

Sweet-bitter was thy life, and bitter-sweet,
Blown with success, and bloody with defeat,
Beloved by beauty, and oppressed by care,
Fevered by passion, frozen by despair.
Thy fervour would not wait
The seed within the sod,
The ripening of Fate,
The harvesting of God.
Thy zeal to right the wrong
Both right and wrong down hurled,
Wert fain by dint of song
To build a better world.

iii

But mortised well, and founded deep,
The world's divine foundations are;
The briny tears that mortals weep
May water lilies on a star,
And what we sow our souls may reap
Eternities afar.

To none our final doom is known,
As none our primal birth foresaw;
Yet all things would be overthrown
By any fault, by any flaw,
By loosening of a little stone
In the great Temple of the Law.
We cannot guess, who cannot see
Eternity's entelechy;
And all thy discontent and wrath
Were but a cobweb in God's path;
Still moves the Mighty Purpose on
Through pain to joy, through dusk to dawn.

iv

Wert thou a rebel grappling with the stars
That swing their swords before the Gate of God;
How clashed and clanged the bolts and bars,
With hurtling of thy shoulders broad!
The round sky shuddered, and the sea
Plangent reverberated thee!
Nay, but a bird,

With futile rage,
Shrilling a tune,
Upon the moon,
Bruising thy wings against a cage,
Or a wild moth,
Most vainly wroth,
That war against the world would wage.

v

Life took some dust within his hands,
And made it hear and made it see;
Love rent thy narrow swaddling bands
And bore thee over seas and lands
To the Pisgah of Infinity;
Yet thou art but putrescent dust,
Blown in creation's frolic breath—
The fool of love, the toy of lust,
The dupe of Death.
Dust on a bit of spinning slag,
Belched from the furnace of the sun,
Wouldst dare to raise a rebel flag

Against the Wise and Mighty One!
Why doubtest what he has decreed?
What man can know
What He may sow
Who brings a forest from a seed?

vi

So soon or late the fiercest rebel breath
Is subjugate to Death.
Although we would escape
The grisly shape,
The visage proud and pale,
The grey forefinger with the purple nail
Pointing into the darkness, gross and thick,
Making the senses sick,
And the courage quail,
Yet, be we foolish, be we wise,
Death in the end will look us in the eyes.
This is the test
Of triumph or defeat,
Of worst and best,

Of bitter and of sweet;
This is God's arbiter we all must meet.

vii

And yet, perchance, it was this thought, like flame
Moved thee too soon to call upon Death's name,
To call upon his might to save or slay;
When thou with load of glory and of shame,
With crowns of rankling thorn, and withered bay,
Thou with half-finished work, half-ripened fame,
Went forth and cursed and called him, till he came
In a swirl of surging waves, in a cloud of spray,
And in the deep
Gave thy hot sorrow sleep,
And in his arms carried thy soul away.

viii

Who, who will blame thee for thy broken sword,
Or scorn thee for the discords of thy lyre?
Thou wert a noble singer, and the Lord,

For a reward,
Filled thy wild heart with fire.
It was not strange the cold world should discord
With thy desire;
It was not strange a soul so full of woes
Should seek repose.
We blame thee not, thy failures we forget,
Forget the seeming-weak, the seeming-wrong;
But in our hearts there blooms and blossoms yet
The sweet, wild, poignant passion of thy song.

Queen Alexandra Day

i

MOTHER-QUEEN, Mother-Queen,
How has thou heard, how hast thou seen
Thy people's woe?
Are there not golden bars between
The high and low?
How hast thou heard? How hast thou seen?
How dost thou know?
What can our lowly sorrow mean
To one so high?
Though thou listen, and though thou lean,
Down from the sky,
Thou canst not tell our sorrow and teen,
Nor hear us sigh.

ii

Throned afar,
On a golden star,
How canst thou guess
What sore distress,
And cold, and hunger, and weeping are?
Were it not better to shut thine eyes
To things beneath thee, and far-away?
Why shouldst thou listen for distant sighs?
'Tis thine to praise, and 'tis theirs to pray;
Thou art a Queen by the Grace of God,
And the height is high, and the gulf is broad.

iii

Mother-Queen,
Art mother of all the land;
Hast heard and seen,
Canst pity and understand;
And in thy motherly compassion now,
We half forget the crown upon thy brow
And come to thee like children. Queen most fair,
Mother most wise and good,

These garlands of wild roses everywhere
Have bound us in the bonds of brotherhood;—
Hast brought not only to the hungry food
And solace to Despair,
Hast made us see that even on a throne
Pity and Love are beautifully shown,
And that a queen
Is ne'er more queenly seen
Than when she cometh down to comfort care.

iv

Thy voice is like the bugle-voice of dawn—
The orison
Of many birds and rivers, and thine eyes
Are like the morning beauty of the skies.
Love dawns in thee—sunlight, and song, and dew,
Ideals morning-wise
And morning-true;
Love dawns in thee, and hearts of men awake
To worship Love even for Beauty's sake.
In every heart thy Love and Beauty stir

Beauty and Love. Thou art the harbinger
Of charity, and truth.
Like pinions of an Angel Beautiful
Rippling the peace of a Bethesda pool,
To healing of the people is thy hand
Moving our pity. Mother of the land,
Because thou lovest thou dost understand.

"Because Unworthy"

BECAUSE unworthy, therefore did I rise,
Wrathful and reckless with my heart on fire,
Crying, "O foolish Love who would aspire
To win Earth's truest soul and bluest eyes,
Some Hope perfidious, some Dream unwise
Has duped and cozened thee. Now break thy lyre,
Strangle thine impotent and mad desire,
And kneel outside the pale of Paradise,
Because unworthy!"

But she came forth, most lily-white and fair,
And took Love by the hand and led him in,
Saying, "Love comes to solace Love's despair,
And comfort loneliness, and conquer sin,
And all my heart's best love thy love will win,
Because unworthy."

Rewards

YOU who wait on the Lord
  You who pray for a prize,
You who claim a reward,
  Have you nor ears, nor eyes?

Have you nor hands, nor feet,
  Have you nor wife, nor son?
If greater reward be meet,
  What have you said or done,

To merit a further grace?
  O you have kept from sin!—
Kept from the tight embrace
  Of the devil's snare and gin.

Your deeds had a righteous shape,
  Yet they were not done well;

You did them but to escape
From the pangs and the pains of Hell,

And were ready to leave a wife,
Or a son, or a friend behind,
And enter eternal life
To your own fair soul assigned.

Not Love, not Love was the root
And the source of your noble deeds:
Love has its own sweet fruit,
Never reward it needs.

Love could never agree
To the creed you hold as true—
A hell for such as me,
A heaven for such as you.

The hell only I wot
Is such a creed to hold,
And such hell is not hot,
But narrow, and mean, and cold.

. . . . .

Reward! You have life, and limb,
  You have heart, and brain, and breath,
And soon when your eyes grow dim
  You will have the repose of death.

Best let rewards alone,
  Sir Benjamin Pharisee,
And pray that mercy be shown
  To sinners like you and me.

Dreams

To M. S.

O DREAMS are sweet, and dreams are swift,
  Divinely bright, divinely dim,
And dreams are free to dance and drift
  Beyond life's round horizon-rim.

O dreams are swift, and dreams are sweet,
  And dreams are dim, and dreams are bright,
Yet braver are the human feet
  That labour up the mountain height.

And braver is the human heart
  That dares to live its life alone,
That in a desert dwells apart,
  And makes the loneliness a throne.

And bravest is the heart that strives
  To kindle other hearts with song,
And make our mean discordant lives
  Melodious, and free, and strong.

That makes truth fairer than our dreams,
  That makes our fairest dreams come true;
Bravest is such a heart, meseems,
  Lady, as beats in you.

Lilies

THE solid world of sense dissolves away;
The forest swoons; the mountains swing and sway;
The sea becomes a blue amorphous mist,
Like vapours of a melted amethyst;
The whole round globe is as a bubble blown;
Nothing seems real save your soul alone.
For through your lucent eyes our dazzled sight
Espies the glimmer of immortal light;
And through your eyelid lilies sees enshrined
The deathless lilies of Eternal Mind,
And all things seem unreal and true
Beside the bright apocalypse of you.

The Joy of Youth

i

WHAT dost thou chase?
A maíden coy!—
The elusive face
And heart of Joy!

ii

Thou seekest in truth
A rainbow shed;
Thy Joy was Youth
And Youth is dead.

Love's Death

As dumbly as the sunset overhead
Swoons from its life of amethyst and gold
Into dark death, thou brokest from our hold
And died without a mourner by thy bed.
Not till we felt that something fair had fled,
Not till we turned to kiss thee as of old,
Not till our lips in kissing knew thee cold,
Ah, not till then, Love, knew we thou wert dead.

When didst thou die? We do not know the hour!
We had forgotten thee in work and play,
And like some delicate and fragile flower
Didst gradually wither day by day,
Tho' needing only sunshine, and a shower
Of April tears to save thee from decay.

Thought

WHAT is the firemist, but a thought,
A figment of the fervid brain?
Without thy thinking it is nought—
Insensible, inert, inane.

And though the thought be wise and warm,
And from its womb a world arise,
And in the world strange monsters swarm,
And grow to men with human eyes,

Still, thought is the creative force;
And though the forms of thought decay,
Natheless, the spiritual source,
Of thinking will not pass away.

Brain-cells? These, too, in thought exist,
How then can thought on these depend?
The force of thought will still persist,
Altho' these things of thought do end.

"Her Soul"

HER soul is vague and shallow—
A thin uncertain stream
That trickles o'er the fallow,
Dim deserts of a dream.

It knows nor nock nor mountain,
Nor cataract nor pool;
It bubbles from a fountain,
And loiters calm and cool.

It ripples not nor revels,
But lisps its lazy tunes,
Along the dusty levels,
Around the sandy dunes.

Across the plains of dreaming
I watch it twist and run—
A thread of silver gleaming
In a Sahara sun.

A Blossom of Flowering Seas

No spirit brooded on the placid deep,
Like blind blue eyes awake and yet asleep,
Like dead blue eyes that neither laugh nor weep,
The ocean lay. The waves no blossom bore,
There flowered no foam upon the barren shore.

Then wondrously and strangely as a star
Out of a firemist grows,
I saw a billow blossoming afar
Into a rose—
Into the lily, and the rose of thee,
Thou fairy blossom of the flowerless sea.

O, as upon the sea I saw thee float,
Thro' the blue water gleamed thine arms and throat
Like water-lilies swaying in a mist
Of lapis lazuli and amethyst,

And thy face, sweetly blossoming above,
Lay like a rose upon the breast of Love.

Then found I all the meaning of the world,
I saw all nature like a bud unroll;
From the far nebula I saw unfurled
The beauty of thy body and thy soul,
And knew that God's importunate desire
For beauty had conceived the mist of fire,
And that a living heart of love must be
Within the heaving bosom of the sea.

Love's Immortality

So sorely wounded, Love, so dark and deep,
So pitiful his eyes, so full of pain,
That men lamented, saying he was slain,
And huddled women bowed their heads to weep.
Then God was wroth, and made His lightning leap,
And rolled His loudest thunder to arraign
A fear so blindly foolishly profane,
Bewailing Love whom all the angels keep.

And thou blasphemest, thinking that my heart
Has lost the love that made it burn and thrill;
Altho' the first wild rapture may depart,
The love of loveliness is with me still;
And love of all the lovely things thou art
Upholds my courage and inspires my will.

FAIR Hope that will not die,
I lay my head at night
Upon your bosom white,
And with the dawning light
Through meadows wet with dew,
I walk with you,
Fair Hope that will not die.

Fair Hope that will not die,
I would that you were dead,
For now the leaves are shed
And darkness overhead,
A wintry sky;
I would that you were dead,
Fair Hope that will not die.

Love's Youth

WHEN hair of gold
Turns hair of grey;
When joys grow cold
And fade away;
Then Loves grow old,
And Loves decay.

Nay, there you miss
Love's meaning high:
Love is nor kiss
Nor lover's sigh
But inmost Bliss
That cannot die.

It is a lark!
On soaring wings,
Or day or dark

It ever sings
—O mortals hark!—
Immortal things.

It is the blood
I' the Heart of God:
It brings the bud
To Aaron's rod;
And stirs the mud,
And stings the clod.

With songs unsung,
And tales untold,
With seeds unflung,
And buds unrolled,
Love will be young
Till God is old!

"Is There No Hostel by the Way of Life?"

Is there no hostel by the way of life,
No place o'ershadowed from the sun and sin
Of noisy noonday, sheltered from all strife,
And dust, and din?

Is there no place where men may, mesh by mesh,
Sunder their carnate bonds and walk abroad
Free souls,—no place where they may doff the flesh
And talk with God?

Yea, there are holy hostels on our path,
Where peace, and beauty, and refreshment are,
Where God thrusts back the world, and cries in wrath,
"Thus far, thus far."

Go, watch the lily coming thro' the sod,
And thou shalt be refreshed as if with wine,
Supping, as in a hostel with thy God,
Of food divine.

Or gaze on Ocean when the twilight lingers
Over its waves, as young as at their birth,
When thunderous they trickled thro' God's fingers
Upon the Earth.

Or climb a hill. The world is short of breath,
Thou wilt not find her cloven footprints there,
And thou wilt recognise as angels, Death,
And Toil, and Care.

There stand, a living and discarnate soul,
Until the angels drop their dark disguise,
And show thee, hidden under veil and stole,
Their wings and eyes.

Then thou shalt turn thee to thy task as one,
Who cometh from a hostel fresh and strong,
Meeting and greeting dust, and rain, and sun,
With laugh and song.

Yea, there are hostels on the path of duty,
Holy of Holies on the way of Life,
Where men are comforted by Love and Beauty,
After their strife.

A Sea Song

HER bosom is white as the ocean-foam;
Her breath is sweet as the ocean breeze;
And the tide of her beauty will lift me home,
Over the seas.

The sails will fill, and the oars will beat,
And the sun will shine in the cloudless blue,
For a lady awaits me, fair and sweet,
And kind and true.

Starry Eyes

"Would I might be . . .
Yon host of starry eyes to gaze on thee."

THROUGH thine eyes of brown
  Would they gaze,
Looking boldly down
  Lonely ways.

Till thy radiant mind,
  Like a rising sun,
Did eclipse and blind
  Everyone.

Compensations

LIFE laughs and sighs,
Life gives and takes;
A Pleasure dies,
A memory wakes.

Out of the Night
Arises Morn;
When fades the light
The stars are born.

Life take a part
To make a whole,
And breaks the heart
To save the soul.

Light and Darkness

WHAT radiant eyes, what shining hair,
What gleaming arms, what flashing teeth!
Yet only Stygian darkness there
In the dull soul beneath.

Worship

WORK is devout, and service is divine.
Who stoops to scrub a floor
May worship more
Than he who kneels before a holy shrine;
Who crushes stubborn ore
More worthily adore
Than he who crushes sacramental wine.

"The Husk of Life"

O, THE husk of life your hearts have cast away,
There is nought between your subtle souls and God;
And your eyes are bright with the light of a larger day,
And with wings your shoulders are clad, and your feet
are shod.
Mighty Love in your nostrils has breathed, and made
Your spirits fervid, and faithful, and unafraid,
Alive with a life that knows nor decay, nor death,
Fed by eternal tides of immortal breath.

Reckless

THIS is the reckless thing I do,
Simply because her eyes are blue,
As are the summer skies above her;—
Merely because her eyes are blue,
This is the foolish thing I do,
I love, love, love her.

Transformation

THE sunbeams beating on thy bosom
As bouquets of white lilies blossom;
But where the beams thy lips have wed
They ripple into roses red.

Bound

I BIND thee to me, without sign or sound,
Beloved one;
I bind thee to me as the Earth is bound
Unto the sun.

Now, with thy budding hopes and April dreams
Around me roll,
And evermore my gentle fostering beams
Will sun thy soul.

Yea, evermore my silent wordless light
Shining above,
Will ripen in thy heart the red and white
Blossoms of love.

The Chapel

A Picture

HIGH-PERCHED upon a purple parapet,
A saintly sentinel of marble hewn,
Clearly defined in sable silhouette
Against the silver of a gibbous moon,
Fetched out a handless arm as black as jet,
Calling upon the stars in prayer or threat.

Within the porch, an angel lying prone
Pressed her white bosom to a broken cross
And grizzly Death engraven on a stone;
Jaundiced and leprous with a lichen floss,
Leered through a jungle-maze of grass unmown,
Grinning to see an angel overthrown.